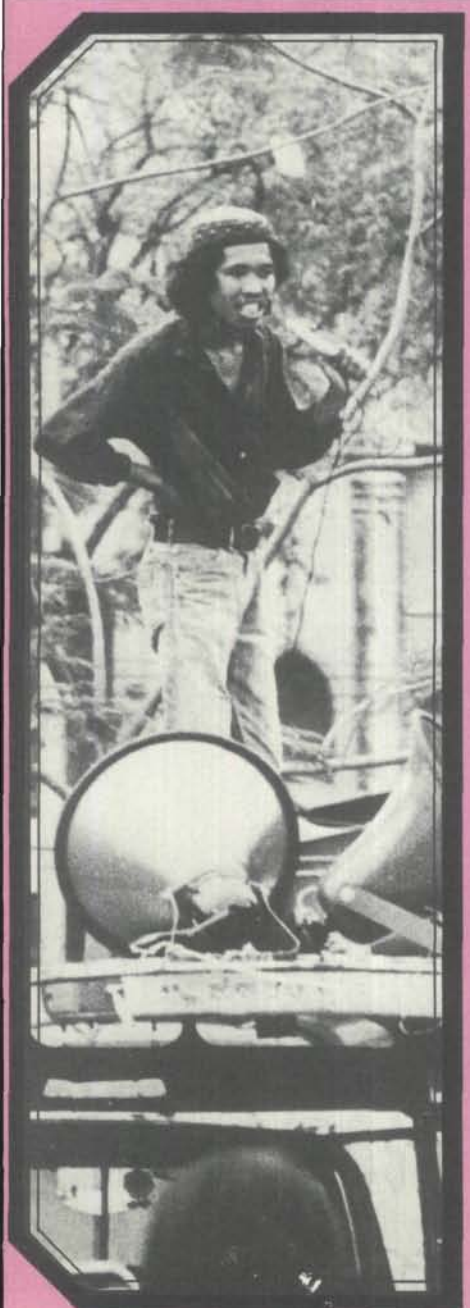
# Problems of Communism

MAY-JUNE 1976



## SOUTHEAST ASIA

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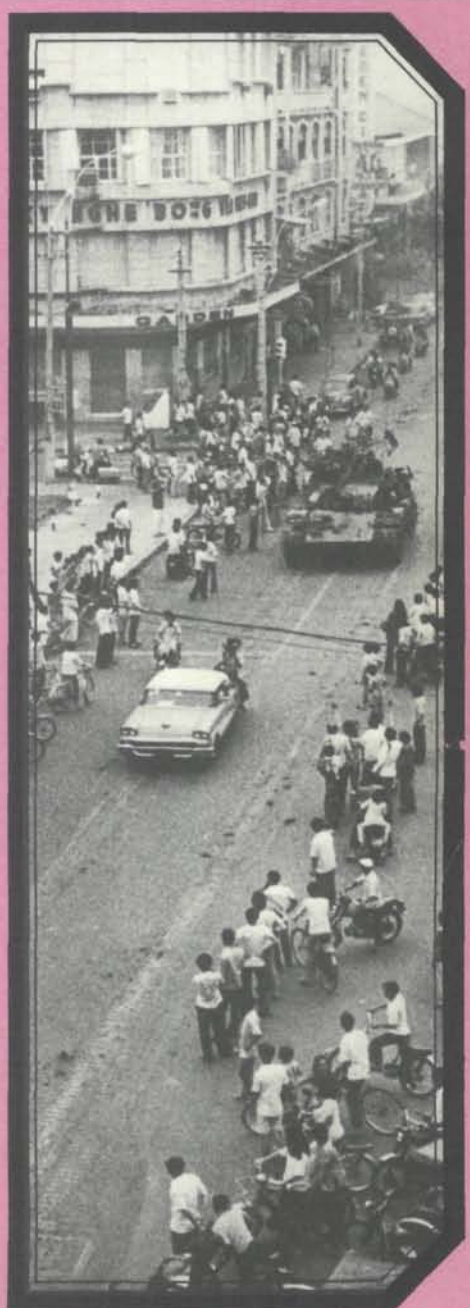

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# Problems of Communism

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**MAY-JUNE 1976 VOL. XXV**

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SUBSCRIPTIONS: Within the United States, annual subscriptions or single copies of *Problems of Communism* may be purchased from the Superintendent of Documents, US Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 20402. Price per copy: $1.60. Subscription price: $9.35. Outside the United States, *Problems of Communism* may in most cases be obtained free of charge by writing to the nearest office of the United States Information Service. The journal can also be ordered directly from the US Government Printing Office for foreign mailing, at a price of $2.00 per copy and $11.70 per subscription. A discount of 25% is offered for orders of 100 or more copies.

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INDEXING: Articles in *Problems of Communism* are indexed, *inter alia*, in the *Social Sciences Index*, the *Bibliographie Internationale des Sciences Sociales* (all sections), *ABC POL SCI*, and *International Political Science Abstracts*.

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Cover: left, a member of the National Student Center of Thailand at a March 1976 demonstration; right, Communist forces enter Saigon on April 30, 1975. Photos by Norman Peagam and Tiziano Terzani, both via the *Far Eastern Economic Review*.

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# Southeast Asia Today

EDITORS' NOTE—The Communist takeovers in Indochina in 1975 have not only produced major alterations in the situation in Southeast Asia but also raised many questions about the future of the area. The following articles attempt to illuminate various aspects of the current state of affairs there. Ms. Hammer assesses the recent foreign policies of the three Indochinese Communist countries—Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. Mr. Zimmerman analyzes the Communist insurgency in Thailand, with attention to the impact of the Communist victories in Indochina on the prospects of the local Communists. Mr. Durdin examines the international and domestic factors affecting the fortunes of a divided Philippine Communist movement.

# Indochina: Communist but Nonaligned

**By Ellen J. Hammer**

For the first time since the countries of Indochina regained their independence from France more than two decades ago, regimes professing a common ideology sit in Phnom Penh, Vientiane, Saigon, and Hanoi. The long struggle to unite the people of Vietnam, now over 45 million in number, under the Hanoi government—a struggle that ravaged Cambodia and Laos as well as Vietnam—has transformed the political map of Indochina.

On April 30, 1975, when North Vietnamese troops entered Saigon, the partition of Vietnam was ended for all essential purposes, although formal reunification at the governmental level would await nationwide elections a year later. Even before the capitulation of Saigon, a revolutionary regime was proclaimed in Phnom Penh on April 17, and the new constitution adopted in January 1976 established "an independent, unified, peaceful, neutral, nonaligned . . . state of the people, workers, farmers and all other Cambodian laborers," to be known henceforth as "Democratic Cambodia."[1] In Laos, in December 1975, the Lao People's Revolutionary Party emerged from behind the façade of coalition government it had maintained with non-Communist elements, to abolish the monarchy and replace it with the Lao People's Democratic Republic.

For these new revolutionary regimes ruling over seven million Cambodians and three million Laotians, as for the long-entrenched government in Hanoi, the coming of peace brought new options and new priorities. It was the time for the Indochinese governments to redefine their relations with other governments

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[1] The text of the Constitution was read by Information and Propaganda Minister Hu Nim over Radio Phnom Penh on January 5, 1976. See Foreign Broadcast Information Service (hereafter FBIS), *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific* (Washington, DC), Jan. 5, 1976.



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within Indochina and outside—with their Communist allies, with their non-Communist neighbors in Southeast Asia, and with the remainder of the non-Communist world.

## "Militant Solidarity"

To describe the relationship of their three ruling parties and governments, the leaders of the new Indochina employ the term "militant solidarity." This term is a useful reminder that the revolutionary regimes in Vientiane and Phnom Penh are not simply reflections of Vietnamese Communist power. Even while pursuing similar objectives, the three governments have retained their separate national identities and show every intention of continuing to do so.

There are strong bonds among them. Their leaders have been formed by a shared revolutionary experience and by an extended war against a common enemy. Many are veterans of the Indochinese Communist Party founded by Ho Chi Minh in 1930.

The entire territory of colonial French Indochina, in which Paris had joined Laos, Cambodia, and Vietnam under its control during the 19th century, was the theater of the war led by Ho Chi Minh against France from 1946 to 1954. The Vietnamese Communists tried in 1954 to win international recognition for the local revolutionary movements they had nurtured on Laotian and Cambodian soil during the fighting, but this challenge to the legitimacy of the conservative regimes in both countries was rejected by the Geneva conference that recognized the independence of the Indochinese states.[2]

However, the Laotian Communist movement, the Pathet Lao, remained in de facto control of two northeastern provinces bordering North Vietnam. Guided, trained, and supplied by Hanoi, the Pathet Lao used the following years to exploit the weakness and blunders of the royal government and extended its sway over other areas of Laos.

In contrast, Hanoi's Cambodian allies, who were less fortunately situated than the Pathet Lao, were refused any enclave on Cambodian territory by the government of King (later Prince) Norodom Sihanouk. Several thousand departed for North Vietnam with Ho Chi Minh's troops, who evacuated Cambodia after the Geneva accords. The Cambodian exiles remained in North Vietnam until a right-wing *coup d'état* against Norodom Sihanouk established a republic in Phnom Penh in March 1970. The war that had been raging in Vietnam during the 1960's and had long since spread to Laos, then engulfed Cambodia as well. The deposed prince and his royalist followers joined forces with local revolutionaries, his longtime enemies, against the new republic, and their ranks were swelled by the return of their countrymen from Hanoi. Together, these old and new revolutionaries constituted the resistance movement that was known as the Khmer Rouge.

On April 24-25, 1970, at a meeting in South China, the Vietnamese moved to resurrect the Indochinese alliance that had been created by the Ho Chi Minh government with pro-Communist groups in Laos and Cambodia 19 years earlier, during the war against the French. Prime Minister Pham Van Dong of North Vietnam, Norodom Sihanouk, and the titular heads of the South Vietnamese resistance movement and the Pathet Lao, Nguyen Huu Tho and Prince Souphanouvong, pledged mutual assistance to defeat the United States and its allies.[3]

The pressures of the intensifying war reinforced the dependence of both Cambodians and Laotians on the Vietnamese, who continued to maintain troops on Cambodian and Laotian territory after the war ended. But after the Communist takeovers in the two countries, the new Indochinese governments began to display their strong nationalism.

The Laotians, while remaining close to the Vietnamese, stated their intention, in the governmental Program of Action that is the charter of the regime, "to strengthen and consolidate the relations, solidarity, friendship, cooperation, and mutual assistance between the Lao government and people and the government and peoples of Vietnam and Cambodia so as to build each country and advance along each country's specific path. . . ."[4]

Phnom Penh's sensitivity about its own national interests has on occasion strained relations with the Vietnamese despite the past and present ties between the two revolutions. In the background has been the memory of Vietnamese conquest and occupation at the expense of the Cambodians before the French colonial period. Dealings between the two countries have long been complicated by the pres-

[2] It should be noted that Cambodia had achieved its independence the previous year, in 1953.

[3] See *Peking Review*, Special Issue, May 8, 1970. The original alliance had been proclaimed by the Viet Minh, the Khmer National United Front, and the Pathet Lao in March 1951.

[4] The text of this Program of Action was read by Kaysone Phomvihan over Radio Vientiane on December 4, 1975. See FBIS, *op. cit.*, Dec. 18, 1975, Supplement 19.



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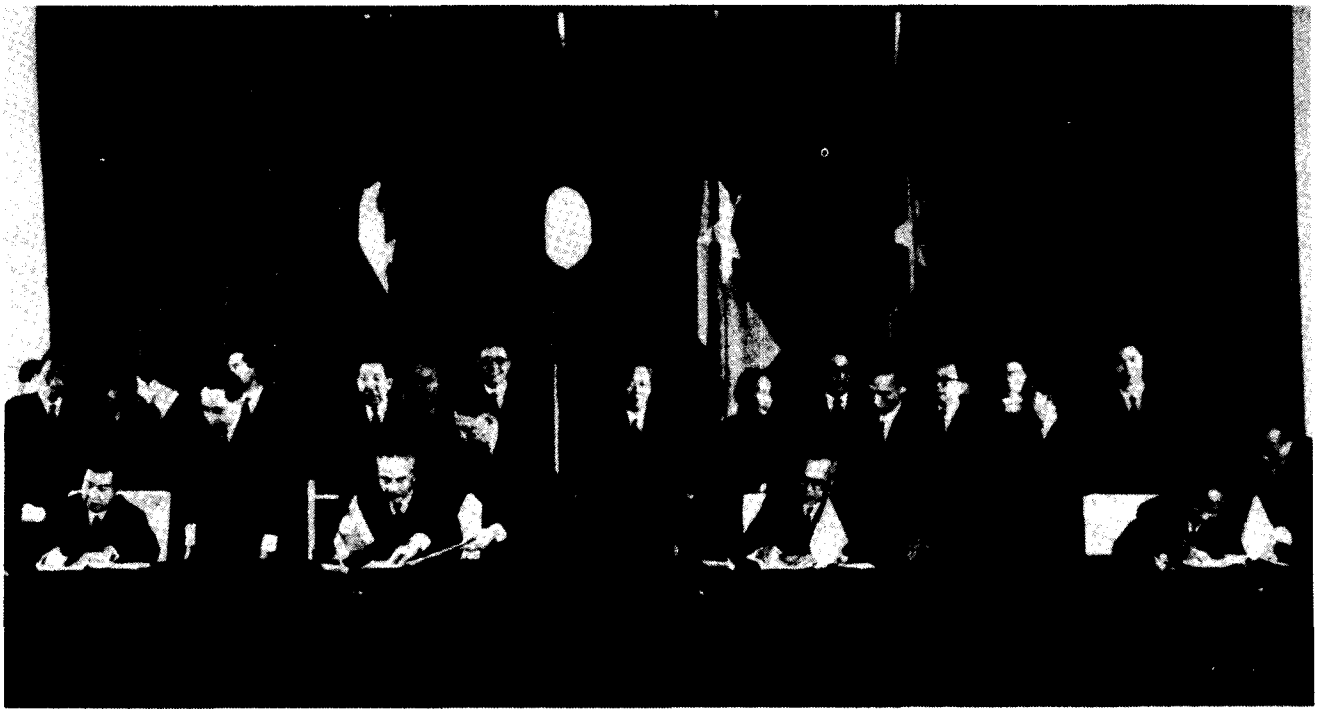

*Chiefs of four delegations from the three countries of Indochina sign a joint declaration in South China in April 1970. Seated from left to right are: Norodom Sihanouk, head of state in the newly-created Cambodian revolutionary government; Prince Souphanouvong, titular head of the Pathet Lao; Nguyen Huu Tho, President of the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam; and Pham Van Dong, Premier of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam.*

**—Photo from *Vietnam* (Hanoi), No. 150, 1970, p. 3.**

ence of large minorities of each of these peoples on the soil of the other. Even in the 1970's, during the war, there were reports of armed clashes between the Khmer Rouge and their Vietnamese allies.[5] The friction has been intensified by the fact that the new Phnom Penh government inherited territorial disputes with the Vietnamese over the ownership of islands in the Gulf of Thailand and over land boundaries.

During the summer of 1975, Le Duan, First Secretary of the Vietnam Lao Dong Party, led a delegation to Phnom Penh; however, this visit apparently was not successful enough for either party to wish to give it much publicity.[6] Later that summer, Khieu Samphan, the Cambodian Deputy Premier who in 1976 was to become chief of state, arrived in Hanoi for the first peacetime meeting of the Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese leaders, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Vietnamese declaration of independence on September 2. But this same period was marked by the strengthening of Cambodia's already close ties to Communist China, and the growing influence of the Chinese seemed to act as a counterweight to Vietnamese influence. "The two sides are determined to unite still more closely," declared a communiqué signed by the Cambodians and Chinese in Peking in September.[7]

A Vietnamese-Laotian declaration in February 1976 offered Phnom Penh gratitude and support "for peaceful, neutral, nonaligned and democratic Kampuchea [Cambodia] in her territorial integrity."[8] However, according to Hanoi sources, reports continued of clashes in border areas where Vietnamese troops were stationed on Cambodian soil. Phnom Penh

[5] See Kenneth Quinn, "The Khmer Krahom Program to Create a Communist Society in Southern Cambodia," Report from the American Consulate in Can Tho, South Vietnam, Can Tho A-008, Feb. 19, 1974.

[6] For official statements on this visit, see Radio Phnom Penh, Aug. 2, 1975, in FBIS, *op. cit.*, Aug. 4, 1975, and *Nhan Dan* (Hanoi), Aug. 3, 1975, in *ibid.* A more critical evaluation appears in *Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong), Feb. 27, 1976.

[7] See *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Oct. 3, 1975.

[8] Vietnam News Agency, Radio Hanoi, Feb. 11, 1976, in FBIS, *op. cit.*, Feb. 12, 1976. These words, including "in her territorial integrity," were a direct quotation from the Cambodian constitution promulgated the previous month.



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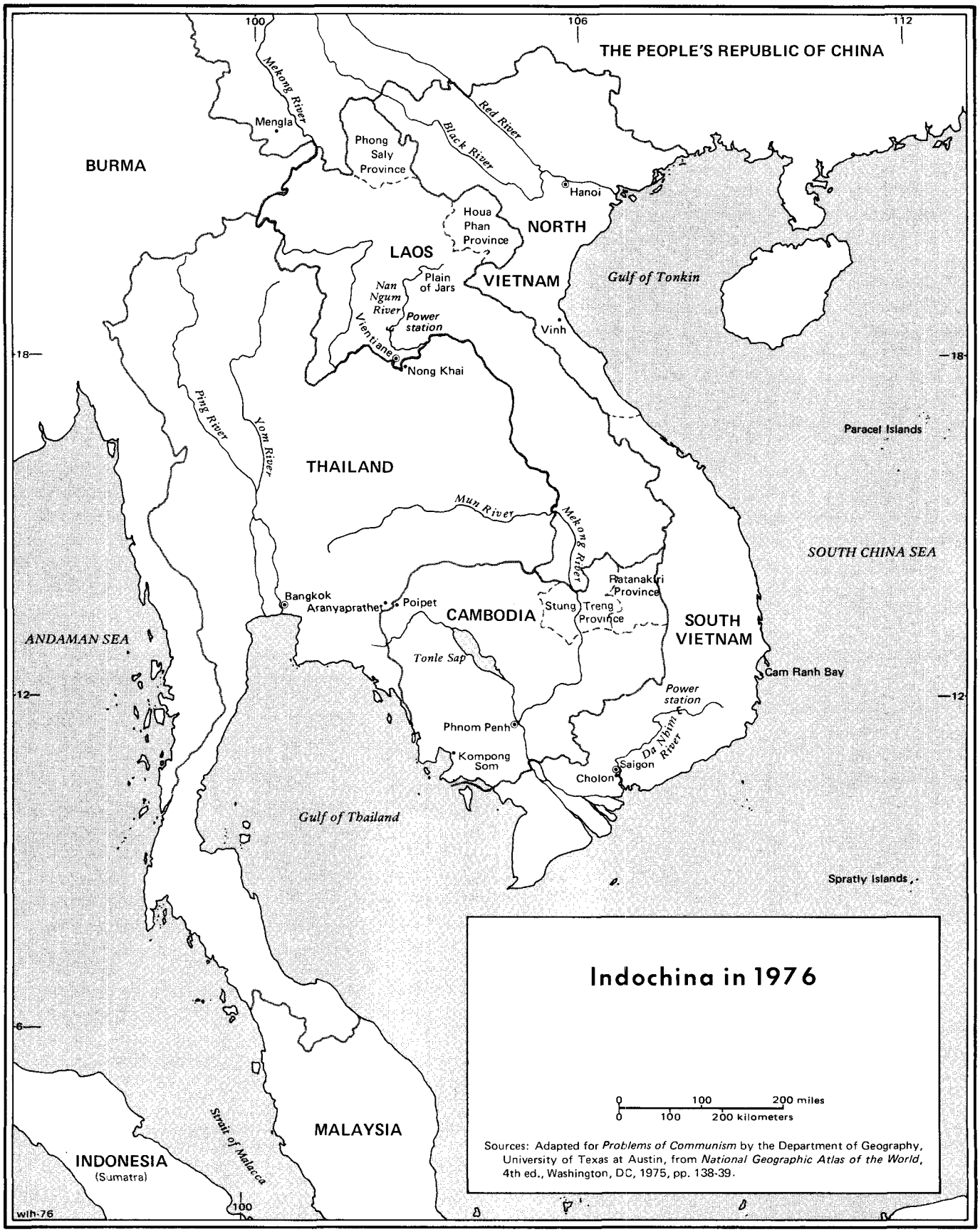


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formally protested to Hanoi—without success—when a large Vietnamese force established itself in the northeastern province of Ratanikiri.[9]

In describing the situation in Stung Treng Province, where the Cambodian, Laotian, and Vietnamese frontiers meet, a Phnom Penh Radio commentary declared: "We always carry our guns at the ready and remain alert, scanning the horizon and patrolling every nook and cranny, so as to detect and stop the enemy from encroaching on our beloved Cambodian fatherland."[10] Cambodian leaders have insisted, in strongly nationalistic statements, that they would permit no foreign bases on Cambodian territory and be a party to no foreign alliances. This exercise in the language of "nonalignment," to which Phnom Penh has subscribed, clearly made no exception for the only major regional power in the area, Vietnam.

By contrast, the Laotian Prime Minister, Kaysone Phomvihan, who is also Secretary General of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, has emphasized the close ties that exist between his government and party and their Vietnamese counterparts—ties which North Vietnam's Le Duan has called a "special relationship."[11] Kaysone has spoken of "the friendship and ironlike militant solidarity between the peoples of the three fraternal countries of Laos, Vietnam, and Cambodia, and . . . the special great solidarity between the peoples of Laos and Vietnam."[12] This solidarity is the culmination of the 30-year revolutionary struggle that was carried on under the leadership of the Indochinese Communist Party until the Lao People's Revolutionary Party could take over.[13]

Beyond the "Marxism-Leninism" and "proletarian internationalism" invoked by Laotian leaders to explain their intimacy with the Vietnamese lay a far older historical pattern. Laos has traditionally been drawn to one or another of the poles of attraction

*Khmer Rouge forces, armed with Chinese machine guns, man a mobile sentry post on the Mekong River in Cambodia.*

**—C/Que via Camera Press.**

represented by the two more powerful countries on its borders—Thailand, just across the Mekong River, whose population is closely related to the lowland Lao (the most numerous of the variety of ethnic groups that compose the Laotian nation) and whose northeast provinces contain 15 million inhabitants that speak the same dialect and observe the same customs as the lowland Lao do; and Vietnam, to the east and north, where the same ethnic minorities live in the mountains on both sides of the frontier. With Vietnamese influence now in the ascendant, Laotian leaders have already discussed plans to do as Laotians had in comparable periods of their history and shift their capital from Vientiane, which is separated from Thailand only by the Mekong River, to another site farther to the north, in the Plain of Jars, with easy access to Vietnam.[14]

Laotian Communist power was long centered in the two provinces of Houa Phan (Sam Neua) and

[9] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Feb. 27, 1976.

[10] *Ibid.*, March 5, 1976.

[11] Vietnam News Agency, Radio Hanoi, Feb. 8, 1976, in FBIS, *op. cit.*, Feb. 10, 1976. The joint communiqúe issued in Hanoi a few days later by the two parties and governments (see footnote 8) spoke of "the special, pure, consistent, exemplary and rarely-to-be-seen relationship that has bound Vietnam to Laos."

[12] Vietnam New Agency, Radio Hanoi, Feb. 8, 1976, in FBIS, *op cit.*, Feb. 10, 1976.

[13] According to an official history of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party, "after a period of preparations at the congress of representatives of the former members of the Indochinese Communist Party, on March 22, 1955, the 300-member Lao People's Party was formally founded. To conform itself to the class character and the requirements of the leadership of the struggle, the Lao People's Party was renamed the Lao People's Revolutionary Party as from the second congress in February 1972." KPL, Radio Vientiane, March 23, 1976, in *ibid.*, March 24, 1976.

[14] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Aug. 29, 1975. This matter was discussed by the previous coalition government. When questioned soon after the declaration of the Lao People's Democratic Republic about moving the capital, Kaysone said the new government had not yet considered the question. Radio Vientiane, Dec. 22, 1975, in FBIS, *op. cit.*, Dec. 30, 1975.



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Phong Saly, each of which shares a common boundary with Vietnam. From these bases the Pathet Lao collaborated with the Vietnamese during two wars. The Vietnamese constructed a network of roads linking the two provinces with Vietnam, and these they have continued to extend and improve. Vietnamese engineers and laborers are still at work in this region, where for years Vietnamese soldiers had fought with the Pathet Lao and trained them, with, in Kaysone's words, "the sincere will to build the Lao revolutionary forces into powerful and firm ones, making them a decisive factor for the victory of the revolution. . . ."[15]

Economic necessity has also reinforced Laotian ties with Vietnam. Laos is landlocked and depends on its neighbors for access to the outside world. Bangkok's decision in November 1975 to close the frontier with Laos following a border incident played into Hanoi's hands. Laos was forced to turn away from its trading partner on the other side of the Mekong and to look to Hanoi for an outlet to the sea. In this emergency, Hanoi dispatched supplies by land and began an airlift to bring fuel and food to Vientiane, and the Soviet Union and other countries sent help. Vietnam undertook to transport 60,000 tons of Laos-bound merchandise during 1976 and to improve transport links between the two countries.

More important for the future, the Laotians and the Vietnamese are committed to building a road from Laos across Vietnam to the coast. When this road is completed, Bangkok will lose its dominant position in direct Laotian trade and in the transit of Laotian imports and exports.

The Laotians have been promised many other types of Vietnamese assistance. When Laotian leaders visited Hanoi in February 1976, the two governments worked out a program of far-reaching cooperation in economic, cultural, and scientific matters. The Vietnamese will train economic, financial, scientific, and technical cadres and increase their aid in such areas as education and health. On the return of the delegation to Vientiane, the Laotian government announced that several major problems between the two countries had been solved.[16]

Although the Cambodian revolution has assumed a more radical guise than that of its neighbors, relations between the two smaller Indochinese states appear to have remained amicable. In the Laotians' time of economic crisis, with the Thai border closed, their neighbors across the southern frontier in Cambodia have made friendly gestures of support. In March 1976, Phnom Penh presented Vientiane 3,000 tons

[15] Vietnam New Agency, Radio Hanoi, Feb. 8, 1976, in *ibid.*, Feb. 10, 1976.

[16] Radio Hanoi, Feb. 11, 1976, and Radio Vientiane, Feb. 18 and 21, 1976, in *ibid.*, Feb. 12, 19, and 23, 1976.

*Aid to Laos: left, an East German plane donated to help transport from Hanoi aid shipments originating in the USSR and other socialist states; right, emergency supplies being airlifted from Hanoi to Vientiane.*

**—Link/ADN-ZB via Sovfoto and S. Takeuchi/*Far Eastern Economic Review.***



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of rice.[17] Phnom Penh has agreed to allow Laos to use the port of Kompong Som and a road for the transit of goods.[18] While Kaysone has not yet visited Phnom Penh, a Laotian delegation was said to have been warmly received there in December 1975, and Kaysone made a point of calling the mission a brilliant success.[19] Diplomatic relations were established between Laos and Cambodia in March 1976.

Whatever the "militant solidarity" between the three states of Indochina, however, their postwar problems cannot be resolved without substantial outside assistance. This is especially true of Hanoi, whose enormous problems of reconstruction and development have been compounded by the necessity of dealing with the severe economic problems in South Vietnam. The Soviet Union and China had provided substantial and indispensable help throughout the war, and it was to one or both of them that the Indochinese states naturally turned first.

## The USSR and China

In early 1975, Ho Chi Minh's dictum that Vietnam should steer a middle course between the Soviet Union and China, accepting aid from both and alienating neither, was still the basis of Hanoi's foreign policy. While the USSR's geographic remoteness from Vietnam may theoretically have given it greater appeal as an ally, no responsible Vietnamese government could ignore China's proximity on Vietnam's northern frontier. The widely publicized anti-Chinese component in the Vietnamese political tradition is most meaningful when understood not just as a legacy of the succession of wars Vietnam had fought to win and safeguard its independence from China, but also as a reminder of the geographic imperative that made it impossible for Hanoi to formulate a foreign policy without reference to China.

Throughout the war years, the rivalry between the Soviet Union and Communist China had not prevented Hanoi from dealing more or less equally with both, but with peace this became more difficult because the antagonism between the two Communist powers led them to take opposite positions on matters of direct concern to the Vietnamese. The Russians, desirous of checkmating the Chinese, favored a strong Vietnam and encouraged its rapid reunification. Moscow also wished to see the Americans withdraw from their remaining bases in Southeast Asia. China, on the other hand, fearful of encirclement by the Soviet Union and its allies, was not eager to have Vietnam emerge as a strong regional power, and was ready to accept a continuing American military presence in countries like Thailand and the Philippines.

Thus, in pursuing its own national interests, postwar Hanoi clearly found a more sympathetic hearing in Moscow than in Peking. In addition, China's insistence that it, too, is a developing country and a member of the Third World, while perhaps politically attractive to other developing countries (like Thailand, for example) suggested the inability of the Chinese to provide industrial and technological aid of a sophistication and in the quantity that the Vietnamese required for the five-year plan on which they were about to embark in January 1976.

While there is no reason to believe that Hanoi has abandoned its objective of maintaining friendly relations with both the Soviet Union and China, there have been clear signs in recent months of a greater differentiation in Vietnamese attitudes toward the two countries than was previously the case. In October 1975, for example, Le Duan visited Moscow, where he received an enthusiastic reception. During his stay, he and Leonid Bezhnev signed a joint declaration stating that they held "completely identical views" on foreign policy. The Vietnamese specifically endorsed the Soviet position on key issues where this position differed from that of the Chinese—such as the merits of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held the previous summer and support for the Portuguese Communists. At the same time, Vietnam and the USSR concluded two economic agreements—one for aid and trade during 1976, the other a long-term pact to last the length of Hanoi's five-year economic plan for 1976-80. Under these agreements, future cooperation between the two countries was to include coordination of economic development plans, the dispatch of Soviet experts to Vietnam, and continued Soviet training of Vietnamese specialists in economic, technical, and cultural affairs. It would take place within "the framework of multilateral cooperation of the socialist countries."[20]

As detailed in January 1976, Soviet economic and technical assistance to Vietnam is to involve the

[17] Radio Vientiane, March 26, 1976, in *ibid.*, March 29, 1976.

[18] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Jan. 30, 1976.

[19] *Ibid.*, and Radio Vientiane, Feb. 18, 1976, in FBIS, *op. cit.*, Feb. 19, 1976.

[20] *Pravda* (Moscow), Oct. 31, 1975, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, Nov. 4, 1975.



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*Le Duan (third from left in foreground), First Secretary of the Vietnam Workers' Party, leads Hanoi's delegation in Soviet-Vietnamese negotiations in Moscow on October 28, 1975. On the Soviet side are, from the left, Defense Minister A.A. Grechko, Soviet Premier A.N.Kosygin, CPSU General Secretary L.I. Brezhnev, Soviet President N.V. Podgornyy, and Foreign Minister A.A. Gromyko.*

**—V. Mastyukov/TASS via Sovfoto.**

construction of some 40 projects. These include a hydropower engineering project on the Black River with a hydroelectric station of 1.7-million-kilowatt capacity, a thermal power station of 500,000-kilowatt capacity, a coal mine with an annual production of 2.4 million tons, and expansion of the Lao Cai mine for an annual production of 1.5 million tons of apatite. The Soviets are also to assist the Vietnamese in prospecting for oil, gas, and solid minerals, and in developing agriculture. This technical aid is to be "on a compensation basis."[21]

Le Duan was present at the 25th Congress of the Soviet Communist Party, held in Moscow in February-March 1976. (Madame Nguyen Thi Binh, Foreign Minister of the Provisional Government of South Vietnam, also attended.) Treated on the same level as the leaders of the East European Communist parties, Le Duan used the occasion to declare that the Communist victory in South Vietnam was "inseparable from the powerful support, the all-round, tremendous, valuable, and effective aid of the Soviet Union." At the same time, he joined West European Communist leaders in emphasizing that the "irresistible trend of our time is creating even more possibilities for Communists in all countries, so that . . . they may find diversified ways, forms, and methods of struggle suitable for the conditions of each country to take the revolution forward to its final noble goal."[22]

Vietnam's dealings with China, in contrast to its relations with the Soviet Union, have been noticeably reserved in tone—despite the signing of a new economic aid agreement between the two countries in September 1975. On his first postwar visit to China in the same month, Le Duan left without even issuing a joint communiqué with the Chinese. The Spratlys and the Paracels, two groups of islands in the South China Sea, an area that is reputed to be rich in oil, are still in dispute between the Vietnamese and the Chinese. The Paracels have been under Chinese occupation since Peking seized them from Saigon in 1974. The Spratlys, where the Philippines and the Nationalist Chinese government on Taiwan also have

[21] TASS, Jan. 4, 1976, in *ibid.*, Jan. 8, 1976; *Sotsialisticheskaya industriya* (Moscow), Jan. 28, 1976, in *ibid.*, Nov. 4, 1976. It has been reported that the Soviet projects in Vietnam include a glass factory at Cam Ranh Bay in South Vietnam. See *The New York Times*, Feb. 15, 1976.

[22] *Pravda*, Feb. 26, 1976.



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a foothold, were taken over by the Vietnamese from the Thieu government of Saigon even before they entered that city. To Chinese claims of sovereignty over the Spratlys, the Hanoi army newspaper, *Quan Doi Nhan Dan*, retorted that the army was "ready to accept any mission anywhere" and "to go as far as the border areas and sea islands to maintain the security of the fatherland."[23]

Although many countries continued diplomatic relations they already had, or opened up new ones, with the Provisional Government of South Vietnam during the transitional period, Peking—and Moscow, for that matter—did not maintain an embassy in the South. The first official Peking delegation to visit Saigon after the Communist takeover did not arrive until January 1976. The presence of a large Chinese minority in the Saigon-Cholon area may have been one reason for this effort on the part of the Vietnamese to discourage diplomatic activity in South Vietnam by the Chinese Communists.

For Vientiane, as for Hanoi, the area of political choice in regard to the two major Communist powers in the north has been shaped by a mix of geography history, and economic need. In view of the special relationship with Hanoi, the Laotians doubtless have had to consider the Vietnamese position as well.

The Chinese, as a Laotian official has put it, are neighbors, sharing the same borders; the two peoples have planted their crops in the same mountains and ricefields and bathed in the same river.[24] Moreover, the northwest region of Laos is as permeable to the Chinese as the northeast is to the Vietnamese, and as the Vietnamese had done in Phong Saly and Houa Phan, Peking had crisscrossed the northwest provinces with roads linking the entire region to China. In March 1976, plans were announced for the Chinese to extend this road system southward, so that Laos would be able "to open four entrances to China, Vietnam, Kampuchea [Cambodia] and Thailand."[25] During the war, the Chinese had also provided considerable aid to Laos, as they had to Vietnam, and they continued to deliver such items as trucks, bicycles, rice, fuel, oil, and cement.

*Kaysone Phomvihan, Laotian Prime Minister and party chief, meets with Chinese Party Chairman Mao Tse-tung on March 17, 1976, in Peking.*

**—Wide World.**

After the proclamation of the Democratic Republic in December 1975, the Chinese increased their aid to Vientiane.[26] Then, in March 1976, Laotian Premier Kaysone, on the heels of a trip to Moscow, signed a new agreement with the Chinese in Peking for economic and technical cooperation and Chinese interest-free loans to Laos.[27] "The victories recorded by the Laos people cannot be thought of separately from the assistance of the Chinese party, government and people," the official Vientiane daily *Siang Pasason*, declared.[28] In Vientiane, the Council of Ministers offered its deep thanks to the Chinese—and announced that Kaysone would leave again in April with a delegation bound for the Soviet Union.[29]

The Chinese obviously hoped to preserve a direct influence on the course of events in Laos, but there is no evidence that they have succeeded in dislodging the Vietnamese from the privileged position they enjoy in the country, or even that the Chinese are

[23] *The New York Times*, Jan. 25, 1976. Gen. Vo Nguyen Giap wrote several months later: "We must steadily protect our nation's inalienable independence and sovereignty and the sacred territorial integrity of our fatherland with all its land, airspace, and territorial waters from the frontier and mainland to the islands and continental shelf. . . ." *Hoc Tap* (Hanoi), May 1976, as broadcast over Radio Hanoi, May 6, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, May 10, 1976.

[24] Radio Vientiane, Feb. 6, 1976, in *ibid.*, Feb. 9, 1976.

[25] Pathet Lao News Agency, March 18, 1976, in *ibid.*, March 19,1976.

[26] Radio Vientiane, Feb. 6, 1976, in *ibid.*, Feb. 9, 1976.

[27] *The New York Times*, March 19, 1976.

[28] Pathet Lao News Agency, March 16, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, March 16, 1976.

[29] Radio Vientiane, April 7, 1976, in *ibid.*, April 7, 1976.



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holding their own against the Russians, who have been particularly active in the south.

Before leaving Vientiane to attend the CPSU's 25th Congress in Moscow this year, Kaysone thanked the Soviet Union for its "invaluable and effective support and assistance."[30] Shortly before, he had signed a new agreement with the Russians, who had been sending fuel, medical supplies, and food to Laos via Hanoi since December 1975 because of the Thai blockade. Under this agreement, the Soviet Union was to supply Laos with transport vehicles, spare parts for motor vehicles, fuel, foodstuffs, and other goods.[31] Moscow has also committed itself to various development projects such as the construction of hospitals and bridges. The Soviets are now building a city for the Laotians on the northern edge of the Plain of Jars, and Russian engineers, technicians, and mineral surveyors are at work in Laos.[32] On March 29, 1976, at a time when the United States was under pressure to withdraw the elaborate electronic communications and surveillance equipment that it had maintained in Thailand—one of the Vietnamese grievances against the Thai—an agreement was signed in Vientiane for the Soviets to bring such equipment into Laos. The Russians were already engaged in building and improving airfields, notably at Phonsavan, on the Plain of Jars, in the heart of the Indochinese peninsula.[33]

In Cambodia, the Chinese did not have to compete with the Soviet Union. By its delay in recognizing the Cambodian revolutionary government presided over by Norodom Sihanouk from his exile in Peking, until victory was certain, Moscow had so alienated the new regime as to leave the Soviet Union no place in Democratic Cambodia.

China, on the other hand, had not only been the seat of the Cambodian government-in-exile during the war years but had also supplied military equipment and materiel to the revolutionaries fighting the Lon Nol government and its allies inside Cambodia. On May 10, 1975, Radio Phnom Penh declared: "The Cambodians' great victory is also a great victory of the Chinese people."[34] The first accord that the new Cambodian regime signed with a foreign country was an agreement for economic and cultural cooperation with China on August 18, 1975. This promised "unconditional and free Chinese aid."[35]

On March 7, 1976, Ieng Sary, Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister in charge of foreign affairs, wel-

[30] Pathet Lao News Agency, Feb. 23, 1976, in *ibid.*, Feb. 23, 1976.
[31] Radio Vientiane, Feb. 5, 1976, in *ibid.*, Feb. 9, 1976.
[32] TASS in English, Jan. 31, 1976, FBIS, *Daily Report: Soviet Union*, Feb. 3, 1976; Radio Vientiane, Jan. 30, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, Feb. 3, 1976.
[33] Agence France Press, April 4, 1976, in *ibid.*, April 5, 1976.
[34] See *ibid.*, May 12, 1975.
[35] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Aug. 29, 1975.

*Laotian Prime Minister and party chief Kaysone Phomvihan (fourth from right) leads a delegation to talks in Moscow on April 20, 1976. Among those meeting with Kaysone are (left to right in the foreground) Soviet Defense Minister A.A. Grechko, CPSU Secretary M.A. Suslov, and Premier A.N. Kosygin.*

**—V. Kuzmin/TASS via Sovfoto.**



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*A Cambodian delegation led by Khieu Samphan (front right), Deputy Prime Minister for General Affairs and Commander-in-Chief of the Cambodian People's National Liberation Armed Forces, arrives in Peking on August 15, 1975. In the center (in the light suit), is Chinese Vice-Premier Teng Hsiao-p'ing; to his right is Ieng Sary, Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs, and between Teng and Khieu is Penn Nouth, Prime Minister of Cambodia. The visit resulted in the signing of an agreement for economic and cultural cooperation on August 18.*

**—Peter Griffiths/Camera Press.**

comed Li Chiang, China's Minister of Foreign Trade, to Phnom Penh. The Cambodian leader, while insisting on Cambodian independence and self-reliance, offered his "profound gratitude" for Chinese aid, to which, he said, Cambodia already owed much of its success in reopening communications, railways, field embankments, and irrigation canals. In looking ahead to further agreements with Peking on economic cooperation and trade relations, Ieng Sary expressed the "feelings of militant solidarity and revolutionary brotherhood of Cambodians toward the Chinese."[36]

One final point needs to be made with respect to the relations of the Indochinese states with the USSR and China. All the assistance that the two major Communists powers have extended has naturally been offered to serve Soviet and Chinese political objectives. However, it would be a mistake to view the Indochinese states as pawns in the rivalry between Moscow and Peking. This is certainly not the way that Hanoi, Vientiane, and Phnom Penh regard themselves. Even the Communist rhetoric that the three often employ does not disguise their strong, perhaps exacerbated, nationalism. One indication of that nationalism is the adherence of all three countries to a policy of nonalignment.

## Nonalignment

Nonalignment has possessed an appeal for some Indochinese leaders ever since the countries of French Indochina won their independence in 1954. In the midst of the cold war, the wish to avoid the tensions between the two blocs—not by forming a third but by rejecting all blocs—was shared by many peoples that had newly emerged from colonial status. As a consequence, the movement of nonaligned countries took shape in this period and acquired a strong anti-colonial aspect that it has never lost.

Laos and Cambodia both attended the Afro-Asian Conference at Bandung in 1955, which—despite the

[36] Radio Phnom Penh, March 7, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, March 9, 1976.



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presence of some governments that had been sucked into the cold war, like the two Vietnams—was the forerunner of the movement of nonaligned states. The five principles of peaceful coexistence taken over by the Bandung Conference from the declaration signed earlier in New Delhi by Jawaharlal Nehru and Chou En-lai still serve to define nonalignment. They were restated as recently as February 11, 1976, by Laos and Vietnam in the joint declaration that the two countries issued in Hanoi: mutual respect for each other's territorial integrity and sovereignty, nonaggression, noninterference in each other's internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence.[37]

In Laos during the 1950's and 1960's, Prince Souvanna Phouma, when he was Prime Minister, tried to navigate a course between the two opposing blocs, each of which had its own Laotian clients, until pressures from the Laotian Right, in alliance with the United States, forced him to abandon this policy. However, Laos, like Cambodia, remained a member of the movement of nonaligned states.

When the Lao People's Revolutionary Party abolished the monarchy and established the Lao People's Democratic Republic on December 2, 1975, the new government's Program of Action declared its intention to pursue "a foreign policy of independence, peace, friendship and nonalignment . . . to continue opening diplomatic relations and expanding normal trade relations without regard to different social and ideological systems and on the basis of the five principles of coexistence . . . to participate positively in all activities of the movement of nonalignment against imperialism and for the defense of independence and sovereignty."[38] One of the countries to respond to this orientation of the new regime has been Yugoslavia, a leader of the nonaligned movement. The Yugoslav ambassador justified his offer of aid to Laos on the ground that both countries were nonaligned.[39] It is a long time since the 1950's, when the Democratic Republic of Vietnam felt obliged to reject recognition from the Yugoslavs because they had broken with the Soviet Union. Today, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos all maintain diplomatic relations with Belgrade.

In Cambodia, Norodom Sihanouk, despite the disapproval of Saigon, Bangkok, and Washington, became one of the most successful practitioners of the policy of nonalignment. By playing off one bloc against the other, he managed to keep Cambodia at peace until he was overthrown in 1970. After his overthrow, the nonaligned countries, meeting in Algiers in 1973, called for recognition of his Peking-based government-in-exile.[40]

As soon as that government, with Sihanouk at least nominally still Chief of State, seized power in April 1975, it announced a policy of independence, peace, and neutrality and declared its adherence to "the great family of nonaligned nations."[41] Yugoslavia —along with China, North and South Vietnam, North Korea, Cuba, and Albania—was among the first countries to open a diplomatic mission in Democratic Cambodia. Others who later sent official delegations at Phnom Penh's invitation included Afghanistan, Egypt, Sweden, Tunisia, and Zambia, as well as the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The partition of Vietnam in 1954 had the effect of projecting that country into the cold war: the South promptly aligned with the US, and the North cut itself off from most of the non-Communist world by its rigid adherence to Stalinist orthodoxy. Vietnam was partitioned between antagonistic governments for 21 years. During that time, the only attempt at nonalignment was undertaken in the South by Prince Buu-Hoi, who in the late 1950's and early 1960's led Saigon's diplomatic search for Afro-Asian support outside the Communist and anti-Communist blocs.[42] This policy of nonalignment was associated with an attempt at a peaceful accommodation with North Vietnam. It was cut short by the overthrow of President Ngo Dinh Diem in 1963 and American intervention in what became a full-scale war.

The Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, founded six years later, stated that its postwar policy would be one of nonalignment, and it received cordial recognition from the nonaligned states during their 1973 meeting in Algiers. In 1975,

[37] See footnote 8, *supra*. For an authoritative discussion of nonalignment, see Leo Mates, *Nonalignment, Theory and Current Policy*, Belgrade, Institute of International Politics and Economics, 1972.

[38] See footnote 4, *supra*.

[39] Radio Vientiane, Jan. 20, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, Jan. 26, 1976.

[40] Tanjug, Radio Belgrade, Sept. 9, 1973, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Middle East and Africa*, Sept. 11, 1973.

[41] The quotation is from Article 21 of the Cambodian Constitution. See footote 1, *supra*.

[42] Under Buu-Hoi's leadership, Saigon established diplomatic relations with more than 20 African and Middle Eastern states and received warm support from the Afro-Asian countries in the specialized agencies of the United Nations (the two Vietnams were not admitted to membership in the United Nations itself) and in other international forums. See Ellen J. Hammer, *Vietnam Yesterday and Today*, New York, Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1966, pp. 258-60.



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with that government installed in Saigon and with formal reunification between North and South imminent, Hanoi for the first time announced its own adherence to nonalignment.[43]

As the position of Hanoi has evolved over the years, so has the position of the nonaligned states. In foreign policy, these countries have moved closer to the Communist countries—they now count not only Yugoslavia but also the Castro regime in Cuba and North Korea among their members. For Hanoi, nonalignment is both militant and revolutionary. Phan Hien, Vietnam's Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, has explained that his country joined the movement because it shared "the common objectives": "to oppose enslavement and exploitation by imperialism, colonialism and neocolonialism," to defend national independence, to maintain sovereignty over natural resources, and to build a prosperous life for people.[44] ("To work at establishing a new economic order," the Vietnamese and Laotians said in Hanoi on February 11, 1976.[45])

If and how these words were to be translated into action has been put to the test by the policies of the Indochinese countries toward their neighbors in Southeast Asia.

## Southeast Asia

The three Indochinese states encountered a very different Southeast Asia than the one that they had confronted when they regained their independence in 1954. At that time, the region suffered from the fallout of the cold war. In the aftermath of the victory of the Hanoi government over France, the United States and its allies had founded the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization in September 1954—with Thailand and the Philippines the only members actually from Southeast Asia—to defend Southeast Asia against possible Chinese intervention and to protect the non-Communist states in Indochina.

Today, the United States has withdrawn from Indochina, and SEATO is being phased out as an organization. In May 1975, the eighth annual meeting of foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) welcomed the coming of peace to Indochina and reiterated support for the five principles of coexistence whereby states with different political and social systems could live together in harmony. ASEAN brings together Thailand and the Philippines with Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia—all the Southeast Asia states outside Indochina with the exception of Burma—and has no Western members. Since the shift of power in Indochina, ASEAN has adopted a conciliatory attitude toward Peking, and both Bangkok and Manila have opened diplomatic relations with China.

The members of ASEAN have not hidden their concern at the emergence of three militant Communist states in Indochina, but an Indonesian suggestion that security provisions be included in an ASEAN treaty was rejected by the other members. In March 1976, when a treaty of amity and cooperation was signed by representatives of the five member states in Bali, it was left open to adherence by other Southeast Asian countries. None of the Indochinese states, however, has shown any readiness to accept this invitation.

With Thailand separated from Vietnam only by Laos and Cambodia, Bangkok was the foreign capital most directly affected by developments in Indochina. For centuries, Thailand and Vietnam had competed for control over the region, and Cambodia and Laos at various times had fallen under the influence of one or both of these rival states. Most recently, Bangkok had provided bases for the American war effort in Indochina, had supported the Saigon government and the short-lived Lon Nol republican regime in Cambodia, and had been actively engaged against the Communists in Laos. But the war was over, and the Thais were ready to make their peace with the Indochinese revolutionaries.

Cambodia, although the most radical of the three Indochinese governments in domestic policy, has been the least doctrinaire in its attitude toward Bangkok. Radio Phnom Penh made overtures to Thailand soon after the Communist takeover, and when Thai Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj returned from his first official visit to China in July 1975, it congratulated Bangkok on opening diplomatic relations with Peking.[46] Cambodia was the only Indochinese country to extend such congratulations.

[43] In a message to Algerian President Houari Boumediene, Chairman of the Fourth Summit Conference of Nonaligned Countries, Premier Phan Van Dong officially stated that Vietnam was willing to fulfill the obligations of a member of the nonaligned movement and requested admission to the movement. *El Moudjahid* (Algiers), July 30, 1975, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, Aug. 6, 1975. The nonaligned countries, meeting in Lima, Peru, accepted this Vietnamese application on Aug. 28, 1975. See Vietnam News Agency, Radio Hanoi, Aug. 28, 1975, in *ibid.*, Aug. 29, 1975.

[44] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Oct. 10, 1975.

[45] Vietnam News Agency, Radio Hanoi, Feb. 11, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, Feb. 12, 1976.

[46] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Aug. 15, 1976.



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In October 1975, the Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ieng Sary, paid a visit to Bangkok. "I have come here to establish friendly relations with Thailand," he said.[47] During his stay, Cambodia joined Thailand in issuing a communiqué that eschewed ideology: "Mindful of the traditional links and similarities between the two peoples and their two countries, particularly in language, customs and traditions, and through the Buddhist religion" and "keenly aware of the deep sense of neighborliness stemming from the geographic proximity of their two countries," they felt it necessary to "maintain amicable and good neighborly relations" on the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence.[48] The two governments also announced that they would exchange ambassadors at a later, unspecified date.

After the change of regime in Phnom Penh, when the Thai border had nominally been closed, an active unofficial trade supplying Cambodia with urgently-needed rice, salt, gasoline, and other basic goods had begun across the frontier. In November 1975, this was replaced by authorized trade under the direction of a joint liaison committee with an office in Aranyaprathet on the Thai side of the frontier linked by telephone to an office in Poipet on the Cambodian side. By January 1976, Thailand had delivered 20,000 tons of salt to Cambodia even though Phnom Penh was not yet able to honor its commitment to provide lumber and fish in exchange, and the Cambodians were reported asking for more salt and for fuel.[49]

Despite these trade arrangements, clashes did occur in border areas. With no other means of direct contact than the joint liaison committee, the Thais, in December, tried to use the committee in Poipet to pass on a request for a new meeting with Ieng Sary on Thai soil. When no reply was received, the message was delivered by the Thai chargé d'affaires in Peking to the Cambodian embassy in that city.[50]

If only limited progress has been achieved in normalizing Thai-Cambodian relations, the relations of Bangkok with Vientiane have been virtually blocked by the Thai decision to close the border after a shooting incident on the Mekong River between Thai ships and Laotian soldiers in November 1975. At issue is the river borderline that was fixed by a treaty signed by Thailand and France during the colonial period. In January 1976, Bangkok reopened two points on the Laotian frontier in the Nong Khai area opposite Vientiane, but the Thais had decided that an agreement on measures to control the border was a prerequisite to reopening any more than that. Since the Laotians have refused to enter into negotiations for such an agreement as long as the border remains closed, the two governments have reached an impasse.

An additional reason for the Thais to keep the Laotian border closed is their desire to stop infiltration of men and equipment to the armed insurgents of the illegal Communist Party of Thailand. In the past, the Pathet Lao had collaborated with the Thai insurgents—among whom both Chinese and Vietnamese influence is strong—and Laos continued to provide them sanctuary and training.

When the Laotians and Vietnamese issued their

*Cambodian Deputy Prime Minister for Foreign Affairs Ieng Sary at a press conference during his October 1975 visit to Bangkok.*

**—Sara Webb Barrell/Camera Press.**

[47] *Ibid.*, Nov. 14, 1975.

[48] Radio Phnom Penh, Nov. 1, 1975, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, Nov. 3, 1975.

[49] Radio Bangkok, Jan. 30, 1976, in *ibid.*, Feb. 3, 1976.

[50] Since this time, Phnom Penh has established diplomatic relations with two other members of ASEAN, Malaysia and the Philippines, and with Burma.



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joint declaration in Hanoi in February 1976, they stated their intention of helping the other Southeast Asian countries "become really independent, peaceful and neutral."[51] The Lao Minister of Information tried to reassure Bangkok that this did not mean that the Laotians were going to intervene in Thai affairs; they were more interested in seeking foreign assistance for their own economic development.[52] However, Nouhak Phoumsavan, Vientiane's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, still insisted that the Thai insurgents were fighting for peace and independence, and he was unwilling to promise that Laos would not continue to help them.[53]

The refugees who have continued to arrive in Thailand from Laos have further complicated Bangkok's relations with Vientiane.[54]

Despite these various difficulties, however, relations between Laos and Thailand have not been marked by unremitting hostility. When Vientiane revived a project for joining the two countries by a bridge across the Mekong River, Bangkok received the proposal sympathetically.[55] In February 1976, Bangkok, faced with a surplus of glutinous rice in Thailand, agreed to sell 30,000 tons of rice to Laos.[56] Throughout the period since the closure of the border, Laos has continued to let Thailand purchase electricity from the Nam Ngum Dam, which has been used mostly in Thailand's northeastern provinces.[57] And both countries—along with Cambodia and Vietnam—have remained members of the Mekong River Committee, established under United Nations auspices to develop the lower Mekong River for hydroelectric power, irrigation, and navigation to benefit the four riparian states.

Thai-Vietnamese relations have also been difficult. After the collapse of the Saigon regime in 1975, when Vietnam prepared to take its place as a reunited country at peace in Southeast Asia, the Vietnamese indicated a willingness to deal with the Thai government. Prior to that time—during the last two years of the war—Hanoi had rebuffed Thai attempts to open up direct talks between the two governments because of the presence of American military forces in Thailand. But in May 1975 the new Provisional Government of South Vietnam sent a mission to Bangkok to make a claim—unsuccessfully—for the planes and ships that fleeing elements of the defeated Saigon army had brought to Thailand. Later that same month, a delegation arrived from Hanoi to pursue the same subject, but it did not have any more success than the southerners had had. Difficulties arising from the continued presence of American forces and bases in Thailand and of more than 40,000 Vietnamese who had been living in Northeast Thailand since the war with France also remained unresolved. "The main problem," Thai Foreign Minister Chatichai Choonhavan said, "is that we have not talked to each other for thirty years."[58]

The Thais, it had been agreed by the two governments, would send a delegation to continue negotiations in Hanoi, but this trip was never made. Radio Hanoi stepped up its attacks on Bangkok for being too closely identified with American policy.

Deep-rooted suspicion of American intentions after the years of war also led Hanoi to doubt the peaceful character of ASEAN. The Vietnamese did not actually reject the idea of a regional grouping in Southeast Asia, but they saw the remaining American bases in the area as a threat to Vietnamese security and accused ASEAN of "tailing after the United States."

Shortly after the Laotian-Vietnamese declaration in February 1976, Hanoi seemed again to be calling for revolution against neighboring governments. The official Hanoi newspaper, *Nhan Dan,* in a widely discussed article, declared that "the Vietnamese people fully support the struggle of the peoples of the Southeast Asian nations for independence, democracy, peace, and social progress," and it urged the Southeast Asian peoples to intensify their struggle, which "has the brightest prospects ever seen in their history of the past century," to "foil all neocolonialist schemes and tricks of American imperialists and reactionaries, restore true national independence and sovereignty and restore the ownership of the Southeast Asian region to the Southeast Asians."[59]

A Bangkok newspaper quoted Foreign Minister Sinnathamby Rajaratnam of Singapore as saying: "Indochina can choose to be Communist, but we must have the right to be non-Communist. Don't interfere with us."[60] This expressed the feeling of his fellow members of ASEAN, too.

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[51] See footnote 8, *supra.*

[52] Radio Vientiane, Feb. 17, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific,* Feb. 19, 1976.

[53] *Far Eastern Economic Review,* Jan. 30, 1976.

[54] Thousands of Cambodian refugees in Thailand have also created problems between Bangkok and Phnom Penh.

[55] See a report in *The Nation* (Bangkok), broadcast over Radio Bangkok, Jan. 31, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific,* Feb. 3, 1976.

[56] Radio Bangkok, Feb. 11, 1976, in *ibid.,* Feb. 11, 1976.

[57] Radio Bangkok, Feb. 5, 1976, in *ibid.,* Feb. 6, 1976.

[58] *Far Eastern Economic Review,* June 6, 1975.

[59] Broadcast over Radio Hanoi, Feb. 28, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific,* March 1, 1976.

[60] *The Bangkok World,* March 2, 1976, in *ibid.,* March 3, 1976.



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A few weeks later, however, they had more cheering news when, for the first time since the Communist takeover, a Saigon official, at a meeting in Jakarta of the Asian Development Bank, called for all-out economic cooperation. "That is a good sign," Indonesian Foreign Minister Adam Malik said. "We had offered our hand, and they have begun to respond."[61] Delegates from France, the Netherlands, and West Germany promptly urged participation by the Bank in postwar Indochinese economic development.

Where the direct interests of the Vietnamese have been involved, they have put aside the language of revolution. This has been the case in regard to Singapore. Hanoi has welcomed the decision of former Singapore investors in South Vietnam to put money back into the region and has invited others to join them. The Vietnamese not only have resumed trade with Singapore but plan to expand it. A Hanoi official has expressed the hope that Singapore might become a major transshipment center for Vietnamese exports. He said: "We want to restore our trade with Association of Southeast Asian Nations countries to at least its prewar level and open up trade with new areas, such as Europe."[62]

The Vietnamese have thus decided to look for investment and trade beyond the Communist countries and their neighbors in Southeast Asia, toward other countries to which they are not bound by either ideology or geography. Their immediate objectives may be economic, but such decisions, which would lessen their dependence on their wartime Communist allies, are intrinsically political.

## Other Non-Communist Countries

While Cambodia emptied its cities and drove its people into the countryside in order to build a new society by forced labor and rigid controls, publicly spurning any suggestion of modern industrial development, both Laos and Vietnam have recognized that foreign capital and technology are vital to their peacetime economic future, and have welcomed them.

The Laotian government's Program of Action called for "the establishment of economic relations with foreign countries on the basis of guarantees for the independence and sovereignty of Laos and on the basis of equality and mutual interests and without any political strings attached . . . to assist Laos to restore and develop its economy."[63] Phoumi Vongvichit, Deputy Prime Minister, has said that in conformity with its policy of nonalignment, Laos will accept unconditional aid from any country and will continue to collaborate with multilateral organizations like the International Monetary Fund and the Asian Development Bank.[64]

In early 1976, the Laotian government had already been approached about foreign investment by Japan, Australia, India, and West Germany. By March, the West German government had offered 35 million Deutschmarks in loans to expand the Nam Ngum Dam complex and to develop agriculture, forestry, industry, and trade.[65]

The Vietnamese, for their part, had arrived at a turning point in their history as they embarked on an ambitious new five-year plan and moved to complete the economic reunification of North and South. The South presented particular problems. Large-scale economic dislocations and unemployment had developed following the American withdrawal. Modern factories did exist; however, they depended on the United States and its allies for equipment and spare parts.

It is not true that the Vietnamese had been at war for the 30 years prior to 1975, although this has often been said; but it is true that even when there was no fighting, during the years following the Geneva Conference, the country's development was distorted by partition. Partition forced the North and South, which had complementary economies, into economic dependence on foreign powers. Only since 1975 has Vietnam had the chance to develop a more balanced economy within its own frontiers and look

[61] Agence France Press, April 26, 1976, in *ibid.*, April 27, 1976. The official in question, Tran Duong, governor of the National Bank of [South] Vietnam, stated that the merger of the two Vietnams would not prevent cooperation with the Asian Development Bank, even though only Saigon, and not Hanoi, was a member of the ADB. He invited foreign assistance on the basis of equality, mutual advantage, and respect, adding: "We hope that the ADB and foreign banks will play an important role in developing such relations of cooperation and assistance." *Far Eastern Economic Review*, May 7, 1976. At this same meeting, Laos appealed for help in reconstruction and development. Cambodia did not attend.

[62] *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Jan. 2, 1976. The Vietnamese official was Le Van Mau, chief representative in Singapore of the Vietnamese National Import and Export Corporation.

[63] See footnote 4, *supra.*

[64] Radio Vientiane, Jan. 20, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, Jan. 20, 1976; Agence France Press, April 23 and 26, 1976, in *ibid.*, April 26 and 27, 1976; *Far Eastern Economic Review*, Jan. 30, 1976.

[65] Pathet Lao News Agency, Feb. 29, 1976, in FBIS, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific*, March 2, 1976.



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beyond political barriers to the foreign countries best able to supply what it needs from abroad.

One of these countries is Japan. Despite Hanoi's frequent attacks on Tokyo—which it has accused of acting as an instrument of American policy in Asia—relations between Vietnam and Japan were normalized in 1973, and after two years of negotiation an aid agreement was signed between them on October 11, 1975.[66] The Japanese then opened an embassy in Hanoi.

In addition to supplying machines and industrial equipment to the North, the Japanese have been active in the South. They have been invited to repair the hydroelectric power station at Da Nhim and have resumed sending spare parts to assembly plants in the South in which Japanese companies hold shares.

In Paris, there is still hope that France has a role to play in Vietnam. The French misjudged the unity and strength of the Vietnamese Communists when Paris tried to work out a compromise between the Thieu regime and the Provisional Revolutionary Government of South Vietnam, but the ties between Vietnam and France that survived the colonial period have not entirely disappeared. Hanoi seems to have expected more than was actually accomplished by the official mission that arrived in the Vietnamese capital from Paris in November 1975. Pham Van Dong made a special point of calling at the French embassy during that visit; however, only the beginnings of cooperation between Paris and Hanoi were achieved. But Paris has provided Hanoi with both credits and outright aid, and trade between North Vietnam and France has steadily increased. Madame Binh was optimistic during a recent visit to Paris. She said:

*Prospects for France in Vietnam—both north and south—are good. . . . For historical, cultural and economic reasons, France is well suited to cooperate with us. . . . We need machinery and all sorts of equipment for developing our agriculture and industry and exploiting our oil.*[67]

There remains the United States. Both Laos and Vietnam have claimed the postwar American assistance provided for in the so-called Paris peace agreement of 1973. Hanoi has stated that the opening of diplomatic relations with Washington is contingent on the receipt of this aid. But the American position is that the United States does not have any such obligations, either to Laos or Vietnam, because of Communist violations of the Paris accord.[68] (Of the three Indochinese countries, only Laos at present maintains diplomatic relations with the United States.)

Despite this impasse, American technology and science hold a strong attraction for Hanoi. The Vietnamese have made overtures to private American capital, letting it be known that there is a place for American companies to operate even in the North and to continue the search for offshore oil in the South.[69] This could open up a new—and happier—era in American-Vietnamese relations and lead to the ties that Ho Chi Minh tried without success to initiate in 1945. But approval is required from Washington as well as Hanoi, for an act of Congress is necessary to lift the embargo that exists on American trade with Vietnam.

* * *

The first year since peace returned to Southeast Asia is now over, and the directions of the new Indochina are discernible. The Indochinese Communists, with the Vietnamese inevitably playing a dominant role, have emerged from the war confident that their margin for maneuver need no longer be restricted to an area between China and the Soviet Union. Cambodia and Laos, as well as Vietnam, have chosen nonalignment as the path to a diversity of relations with the outside world, in which they see the surest guarantee of their independence and development.

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[66] This agreement, which extended Japanese economic assistance totaling 8.5 billion yen to Hanoi, had first been initialed in Vientiane on October 1. At that time, it was reported that negotiations were continuing over additional aid of 5 billion yen. The assistance that Tokyo agreed to provide was expected to finance rehabilitation and reconstruction work. Kyodo News Service, Oct. 1 and 20, 1975, in *ibid.*, Oct. 2 and 21, 1975.

[67] *Le Figaro* (Paris), March 5, 1976, in *ibid.*, March 10, 1976. This same month, under a contract signed in Hanoi, a ship of the French Geophysics Company arrived in South Vietnamese waters to search for mineral resources, notably oil. Agence France Press, Radio Hong Kong, March 5, 1976, in *ibid.*, March 5, 1976.

[68] This position was reaffirmed, in regard to Vietnam, by Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger before the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations in mid-April of this year. See *The New York Times*, April 17, 1976.

[69] Several American oil companies, as well as concerns from Canada, France, Japan, and Great Britain, are currently engaged in negotiations with Vietnam to resume drilling for oil in the South China Sea. *Ibid.*, April 25, 1976.



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# Insurgency in Thailand

**By Robert F. Zimmerman**

In the wake of the Communist seizures of ruling power throughout Indochina, Thailand today finds itself confronted by increasing dangers stemming from a combination of Communist pressures from outside the country's borders and a recrudescence of externally-supported Communist insurgencies within its frontiers. Communist insurgents are presently active in the mountains of North Thailand, in the rice paddies and low hills of the Northeast, and in the jungles and mountains of the South, while much smaller Communist armed groups totaling perhaps only 50 to 100 men exist in Central Thailand. These forces all receive varying degrees of assistance from external Communist sources. Moreover, while Communist Pathet Lao, North Vietnamese, and Cambodian military forces dominate Thailand's borders to the north, east, and southeast, Malayan Chinese Communist terrorists continue to hold sway along the southern Thai frontier on the Malay Peninsula, and Burmese rebel groups, including some Communists, range freely on much of the western frontier. These circumstances have led many observers to conclude that Thailand, too, will eventually succumb to Communist insurgency. Indeed, the situation has brought the much-debunked "domino theory" very much back to life in the perceptions of Thai and other non-Communist Southeast Asian leaders.

The same perception may well be shared by the new Communist masters of Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia—and by their rival big-power backers, the Soviet Union and China. The Soviet-assisted North Vietnamese and their Laotian allies, for example, already appear to be trying to extend and strengthen their influence over the Communist insurgents in Northeast Thailand, while the Chinese, increasingly concerned that the North Vietnamese may be Soviet lackeys, currently command and doubtless will strive to retain a stronger influence among the Meo and other hill-tribe insurgents in North Thailand. Besides competing for influence with the Communist insurgents, moreover, the Chinese and Soviets are simultaneously vying with each other in efforts to woo leftist elements among the student population of Bangkok as well as to cultivate relations with the established Thai government.

The problem of Communist insurgency has been further complicated by the instability which has characterized internal Thai politics in the aftermath of the successful student uprising of October 1973 against the old military dictatorship. The Thai have since been trying to build a new, democratically-oriented political system, but the period of transition has been fraught with difficulties. The first truly free parliamentary elections, held in January 1975, produced a plethora of new political parties and an unstable coalition government whose position was increasingly undermined by a process of political polarization between Left and Right. This process forced Prime Minister Kukrit Pramoj to dissolve the Parliament in January 1976 and to call for new elections in April, apparently in the hope of paving the way for a more solid coalition government. Although Kukrit himself lost out in these elections and had to relinquish the premiership, the elections did in fact result in the formation of a potentially more stable government coalition of center and conservative parties. Its performance in developing a genuinely democratic political process will have a vital bearing on the prospects for the ultimate success or failure of the Communist insurgency.

In the final analysis, however, there is much about

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Communist insurgency in Thailand that sets it apart from those witnessed elsewhere in Asia—*e.g.*, in Indochina, the Philippines, and Malaysia. For one thing, the Thai political and social culture has proven a relatively potent obstacle to Communist organizational efforts among the ethnic Thai. Moreover, there is a great deal of confusion, in the particular Thai setting, as to who is, and who is not, a Communist insurgent as distinguished from a separatist, a political dissident, or an ordinary bandit. The following discussion will therefore seek to define more precisely the nature and scope of Communist insurgency in Thailand and the sociopolitical environment in which it operates, with a view to arriving at a realistic appraisal of its present situation and future prospects.[1]

## The Insurgency—Origins and Scope

Although armed Communist insurgency is a relatively recent phenomenon in Thailand, having first appeared only in 1965, Communist political activity and influence were introduced into the country as early as the middle and late 1920's, primarily among Thailand's Vietnamese and Chinese ethnic minorities.

Ever since this early period, the Vietnamese have played an important role as a channel for the penetration of Communist influence into Thailand. In 1928, Vietnamese Communist leader Ho Chi Minh began organizing Vietnamese communities in Thailand to support his revolutionary movement in French Indochina, these efforts becoming part of the beginnings of the Indochinese Communist Party, which was formed in 1930. Not long thereafter, the Indochinese party even moved its headquarters temporarily to Northeast Thailand during 1931-33 to escape severe repression by the French colonial authorities in Indochina.[2]

Developments after World War II further strengthened these Vietnamese connections. The Communist leadership of the Viet Minh once again sought to use Thai territory as a privileged sanctuary for their postwar struggle against the French in Indochina, and during the late 1940's and early 1950's sizable numbers of North Vietnamese also fled into Thailand as refugees. These refugees now number at least 50,000 and are generally regarded as pro-Hanoi. Aside from the activity of some Communist political-military cadres, however, there has been no clear evidence of large-scale involvement on the part of the Vietnamese refugee community in Communist insurgency, although this situation could now change under the impact of the extension of Communist control over all of Indochina.

For their part, Chinese Communists have been active in Thailand since the mid-1920's, their activities initially being restricted largely to the "overseas Chinese" community. Then, after the start of World War II in Asia, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) in December 1942 organized a branch in Thailand, which set up a "Thai Section" to carry on propaganda and organizational work among Thai nationals of Chinese descent and others. The Chinese branch party largely dominated the Communist movement in Thailand until October 1946, when the repeal of the Thai government's Anti-Communist Act of 1933 as a price for obtaining Soviet acceptance of Thailand's admission to the United Nations prompted the formation of a separate Thai party. This party initially called itself the Thai Communist Party but changed its name to Communist Party of Thailand (CPT) in 1952.[3] Even today, the backbone of the CPT still consists predominantly of the same 55 Sino-Thai leading cadres who formed the Central Committee in 1952. However, the party draws its ideological inspiration not only from Chinese but also, in part, from Vietnamese sources.

Although the CPT decided as early as 1952 that it must adopt armed struggle and go to the jungle,[4] the Communist movement in Thailand remained essentially urban-oriented until the early 1960's. Then, however, the emphasis began to shift, and the first armed clash between Communist insurgents and government forces occurred in That Phanom District of Nakhon Phanom Province, in Northeast Thailand, in August 1965. Thereafter, the number of insurgents and the frequency of armed clashes and assassinations of local government officials and villagers grew

[1] Louis E. Lomax, in his *Thailand: The War That Is, the War That Will Be*, New York, Vintage Books, 1967, and other, more recent commentators on the situation in Thailand suggest that that country is "another Vietnam in the making." In this writer's view, such thinking is both simplistic and dangerous.

[2] Communist Suppression Operations Command, Royal Thai Government, *Communist Insurgency in Thailand* (White Paper), Bangkok, 1973, pp. 1-2. (Henceforth cited as White Paper.)

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 3.

[4] This decision was taken after the Phibun Songgram government intensified repressive action against the Communists, including mass arrests of alleged party members in Bangkok. The party then decided to spread its cadres out into the rural areas and establish a "Thai Liberation Organization" to prepare for armed struggle. See Donald P. Weatherbee, *The United Front in Thailand: A Documentary Analysis*, Columbia, S.C., University of South Carolina Press, 1970, p. 61; and White Paper, pp. 3-4.



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slowly but steadily in various parts of Thailand, with the CPT finally declaring itself at the end of 1966 to be the manager of the new revolution in the countryside.[5]

But while no one questions that insurgency as such has increased significantly, the extent to which it is in fact Communist-inspired and/or Communist-led and the numbers of participants involved have been subjects of a great deal of controversy and disagreement. Some guerrilla-type activity that is labeled Communist insurgency is actually nothing more than banditry. In all sections of the country, but particularly in South Thailand, there are bandits and smugglers who roam about in small bands engaging in robbery and violence—sometimes even hiring themselves out to venal government officials, politicians, and businessmen. In some of the outlying border areas, there also are insurgents, often miscalled Communists, who are more accurately separatists—*i.e.,* they seek to detach their particular area from Thai rule and either form a new state or join another state—as appears to be true, for example, of the majority of insurgents in the Muslim provinces of South Thailand, adjoining Malaysia. If we interpret the term "separatists" to include those who seem to be seeking only some form of local autonomy within Thailand, then some of the hill-tribe insurgents in North Thailand who have been labeled Communists or have been said to be Communist-led might similarly be included more properly in the "separatist" category. The Communist label is also sometimes pinned on simple political dissidents who have been driven to join in insurgent activities because of harsh treatment and official harassment rather than out of any ideological commitment. Finally, Lt. General Saiyud Kerdphol, head of the Thai government's Internal Security Operations Command (ISOC), has charged that some provincial governors have even "drummed up false reports about insurgency in their provinces"—presumably in order to obtain more development resources.[6]

The obvious difficulty of identifying what insurgents are actually Communists or Communist adherents as opposed to mere bandits, political dissidents, or separatists has resulted in much disagreement among both official and unofficial sources inside and outside Thailand as to the real nature and scope of Communist insurgency and the number of participants involved. Addressing the Thai Parliament in April 1975 when it was considering legislation to deal with the insurgency problem, the late General Krit Siwara, then Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Thai Armed Forces, estimated the overall strength of armed Commmunist insurgents throughout the country at approximately 7,000,[7] while other sources placed the number as of mid-1975 at close to 9,000.[8] Earlier in the same year, insurgents in Northeast Thailand alone were reported in the press to "control" 226 villages.[9] While these figures, for the reasons mentioned above, may be open to some reservations, they are adequate to give a rough idea of the dimensions of the problem.

In any case, it can be stated that Communist insurgents operating under regional branches of the CPT are active, in varying degrees, in at least five different major locations in Thailand. Since the nature and scope of the insurgency differ considerably from one area to another, it is necessary to look at the particular situation in each of these five major locations.

## Geography of Communist Insurgency

The insurgency in North Thailand is predominantly military in nature. Armed insurgents number approximately 3,000 and are located primarily in the provinces of Chiang Rai, Nan, Uttaradit, and Phitsanulok, along the Thai-Lao border (see accompanying map). Most of the insurgents are from the local hill tribes, particularly the Meo; however, according to Thai sources, there are at least 150-200 former Chinese People's Liberation Army troops of hill-tribe descent who infiltrated from South China as a unit in 1971 and were subsequently ordered to remain permanently in North Thailand.[10] This unit may be intended by the Chinese to serve as a stiffening element and as a precaution against possible North Vietnamese attempts to gain influence over the insurgency in the northern border area.

Although the insurgency in the North has been as much an ethnic rebellion as a Communist-inspired "people's war," it is led primarily by Sino-Thai or

[5] Weatherbee, *op. cit.,* p. 62. This monograph provides an excellent historical survey of the Communist movement in Thailand.

[6] Somchai Unhaprani, "Some Governors Added to Insurgency Reports: Gen. Sayud," *The Nation* (New York), March 4, 1974.

[7] *Bangkok Post* (Bangkok), April 16, 1975.

[8] Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, "The Menace to Thailand," *The Washington Post* (Washington DC), June 30, 1975, p. A-14.

[9] "Revolt at the Rice Roots, Iron Fist or Velvet Gloves?" *The Investor: Thailand* (Bangkok), February 1975, p. 10.

[10] See White Paper, Annex A: "Case History of PLA Defector," p. 41.



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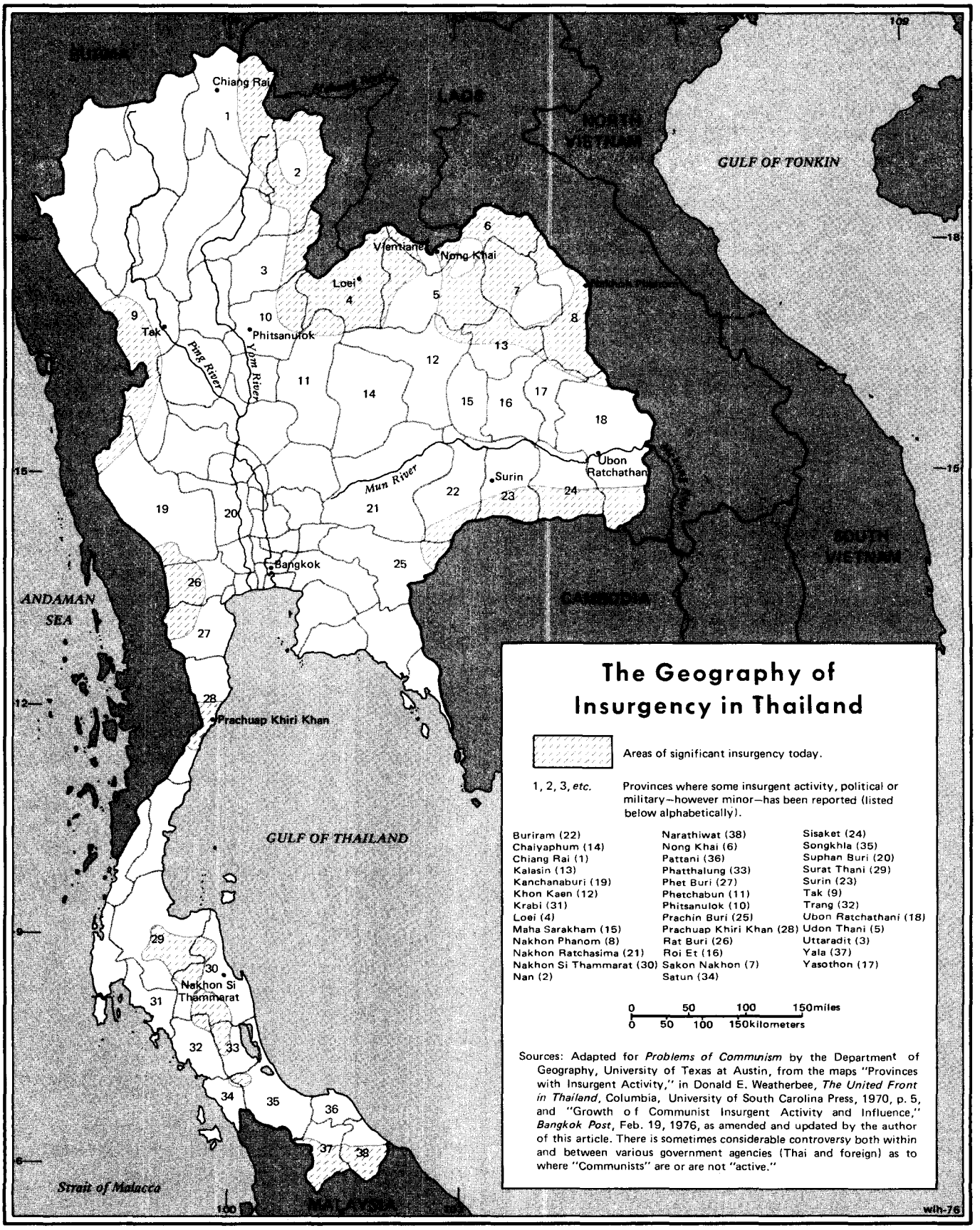


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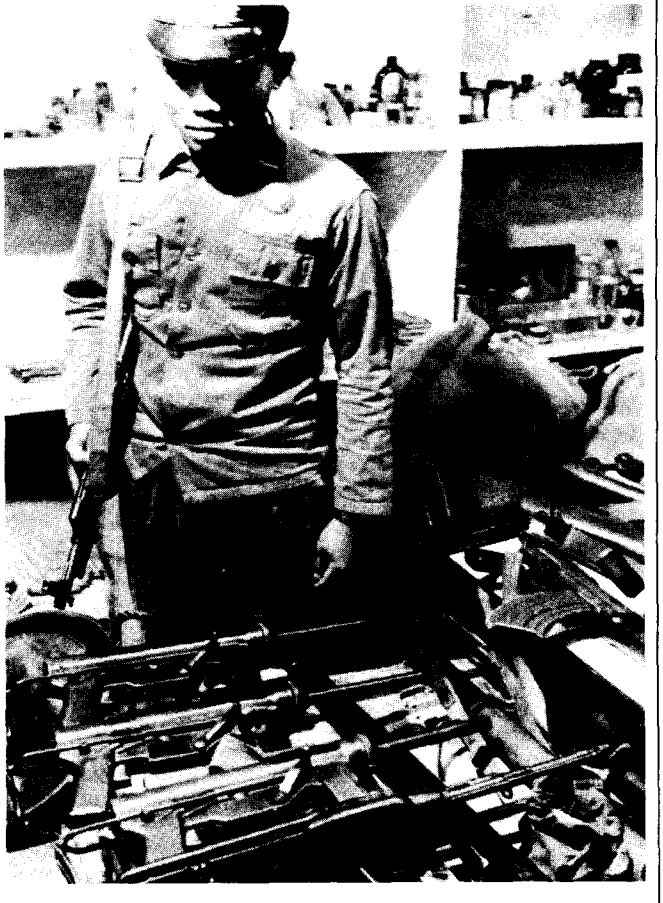
Thai Communist political cadres.[11] The insurgents are exceptionally well-armed with AK47's and B40 rockets, and there have been some sightings of anti-aircraft weapons. Most of the newer weapons come from Chinese or Vietnamese sources and include US M16 rifles evidently captured by the North Vietnamese when Saigon fell in April 1975.[12]

Potentially the most serious Communist insurgency in Thailand is centered in the border region of the Northeast. It is characterized by a relatively high degree of political organization and orientation, with the most organized area in Na Kae District of Nakhon Phanom Province. The primary insurgent base areas are in the Phu Phan mountains in Nakhon Phanom and Sakon Phanom Provinces, and armed insurgents also operate in Loei, Ubon Ratchathani, Kalasin, Udon Thani, and Nong Khai Provinces. Their overall number throughout the Northeast is approximately 3,000, including village militia, not all whom are necessarily armed.[13]



*A Thai soldier dressed as a Pathet Lao Communist soldier examines weapons captured from Communist insurgents during a battle at Nakhon Phanom, in northeastern Thailand, in the summer of 1975.*

—UPI.

Though the insurgency in the Northeast is clearly under Communist leadership, it does reveal a limited degree of ethnic orientation. The predominantly Lao ethnic population in all of the Mekong River border provinces adjoining Laos provides a base for irredentism and hence a potential cause which the Communists can exploit with the objective of detaching the Lao portions of the Northeast from Thai rule.

Here again, though perhaps to a lesser degree than in the North, Sino-Thai cadres at present fill the top leadership positions. There are some lower-level cadres recruited from among the Vietnamese refugee population in the area, and their number could expand greatly in the future as the links between the Vietnamese in Northeast Thailand and the Pathet Lao across the border become stronger in the wake of the Communist takeover in Laos. Currently, however, most of the village-level cadres come from the local Thai or Thai-Lao population.

The insurgency in South Thailand is the most enigmatic in that it involves bandits and separatists as well as Communists. The known Communists fall into two categories: those under the leadership of the CPT and another group identified with the Communist Terrorist Organization (CTO).

The CPT commands some 1,500 armed insurgents operating primarily in the mid-southern provinces of Surat Thani, Nakhon Si Thammarat, Krabi, Trang, and Prachuap Khiri Khan. Surat Thani is the center of the most serious and certainly the most organized Communist insurgency in the South. The main insurgent force of 300 men operates out of the Ban That mountain range between Surat Thani and Nakhon Si Thammarat, while in the Ban Na San and Vieng Sa districts of Surat Thani alone there are an estimated 70-80 main force insurgents supported by some 1,700 local militia, 500 of them armed with weapons seized from government forces.[14] The vil-

[11] Somchai Rakjiwit, *The Jungle Leads the Village*, trans. by Ms. Race Chumsri, ed. by Robert F. Zimmerman, Research and Evaluation Staff, USOM, Thailand, March 1974, p. 229. This report was prepared under the auspices of the Thai government's Communist Suppression Operations Command (CSOC) and consists of a series of case studies of how the CPT has operated in various parts of Thailand. It is probably the most detailed analysis thus far made of the Communist political process in Thailand.

[12] "How the Communists Get Their Support," *Bangkok Post*, April 6, 1975, p. 11. This article was based on a declassified US government report on the external logistics apparatus of the CPT.

[13] George K. Tanham, *Trial in Thailand*, New York, Crane-Russak Co., 1975, p. 57.

[14] Theh Chongkhadij, "Surat Thani, Where It's 'Just Like Vietnam,'" *Bangkok Post*, Nov. 11, 1975.



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*A Communist terrorist training center in Yala Province of southern Thailand, captured by Thai authorities in 1967.*

**—Photo from Communist Suppression Operations Command, Royal Thai Government, *Communist Insurgency in Thailand* (White Paper), Bangkok, 1973.**

lagers in these areas pay taxes to both the Communists and the government. As in the North, the CPT has sought to expand its base of popular support by playing upon ethnic-linguistic (Malay) and religious (Muslim) differences with the Thai population and officialdom.

Unlike this first group, the CTO is composed primarily of Malaysian Chinese Communist guerrillas driven across the Thai border from Malaysia during the emergency crackdown there in the 1950's, and its activities are largely oriented toward Malaysia. There are approximately 1,500 of these guerrillas operating in the southern border provinces of Yala, Songkhla, Narathiwat, and Satun.

Apart from these two Communist groups, both Muslim separatists and bandits (also Muslims for the most part) are active in the South. The separatists, who operate mainly in the Muslim provinces of Satun, Narathiwat, Yala, and Pattani, aspire to separate these provinces from the rest of predominantly Buddhist Thailand and either align with Malaysia or form an entirely new Muslim state.[15] It is not clear how much *ad hoc* cooperation, if any, there is between the CTO and the separatists. It is also unclear whether any of the bandit gangs operating in the area have any links with either the separatists or the two Communist organizations.

In Central Thailand, Communist insurgency has thus far not presented a serious problem. As of 1975, there were fewer than 100 known armed Communist insurgents in the entire area surrounding and immediately north of Bangkok. The city of Bangkok itself, however, has the potential to become a hotbed of Communist activity far more serious than even the insurgency in the Northeast.

It is important to bear in mind that Thailand, like most Southeast Asian countries, is dominated by a primate city. Bangkok is and always has been the focal point of economic, social, and political power in Thailand, as well as of the nation's cultural life. With its large concentration of highly politicized and increasingly leftist-oriented students and intellectuals, it is today a city extremely vulnerable to Communist infiltration and agitation.[16] Ironically, the danger was much less when the military-dominated governments of Sarit Thanarat and Thanom Kittikachorn were in power from 1958 to 1973; yet these governments were more seriously concerned about the Communist problem in Bangkok than anywhere else in the country. After October 1973, however, because of the reduced authority of the military and the government's stronger commitment to democratic principles and the rights of political organization and public protest, it became far more difficult for the government to deal with clandestine Communists taking advantage of these rights to expand their activities in the capital city. This situation may now alter, however, as a result of the recent government change following the April 4 parliamentary election. The new Prime Minister, Democrat Party leader Seni Pramoj, has promised to crack down on all shades of political violence, whether from Left or Right.

## The Causes of Insurgency

The basic causes of Communist insurgency in rural Thailand are similar to those in other developing countries that have experienced the same phenomenon. These causes include limited access by

[15] On the separatist problem in the South, see "Guerrillas Thrive in Southern Thailand," *The New York Times*, June 23, 1975; and Phaisal Sracharatchanya, "The Separatists," *Bangkok Post*, Oct. 26, 1975, p. 5.

[16] This vulnerability is underlined by the recurrent student riots, sabotage, and infiltration that have been experienced in other Asian primate cities, such as Manila, Seoul, Djakarta, and Rangoon.



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the rural population to substantive political participation; restricted social mobility; the gap between popular expectations and government performance in providing improved conditions; economic disparities and inequality of opportunity; corruption in both the governmental and commercial sectors; poor treatment of villagers by some government officials; and ethnic, land, and citizenship anomalies. Here again, however, the particular causes for participation in Communist insurgency vary from region to region.

In the North, the root cause of insurgency seems to lie in the deep spiritual attachment of the hill tribes to the land area which they have traditionally inhabited and which they believe to be their birthright. These tribes have not actively sought—and in fact have been resistant to—integration into the Thai body politic. Thus, ironically, official efforts to give them equal rights within the national political framework have often been turned against the government, and the hill peoples have tended to view government programs to eliminate the slash-and-burn cultivation techniques they have used for centuries and to do away with opium poppy production in their home areas as threats to their existence and as attempts by the lowland Thai to control hill-tribe life.[17] The Communist insurgents in the area have been quick to cater to these sentiments and concerns. In direct contrast to some of the government's policies and programs, they tell the tribespeople that the Communists will let them keep their land and continue to grow opium, with the result that the insurgents have come to be looked upon as protectors of the local inhabitants against an oppressive central government.

An increased awareness of this problem was evident in a recent article by ISOC chief Lt. General Saiyud Kerdphol in which he suggested that the development of a highly centralized bureaucracy designed to resist encroachment by European colonial powers had resulted in a kind of "internal colonialism." General Saiyud explained this phenomenon by saying:

*. . . in order to strengthen the center against attacks [from colonial European powers], it was necessary to obtain a firm grip on the countryside and to use its resources to support the capital . . . [but] avoiding colonization by Europe meant simply that we colonized our own people. This internal colonialism . . . has led to obvious difficulties among ethnic Thai themselves. . . . When applied to non-Thai areas such as those occupied by the hill tribes in the North, the policy has led to a disastrous tribal revolt.*[18]

*Members of a hill-tribe family gather outside their huts in northern Thailand to travel to market.*

**Alfred Gregory/Camera Press.**

Thus, despite the fact that the relative remoteness and inaccessibility of the hill-tribe region has restricted contact between the tribespeople and government officials, what contacts there have been have generally been regarded by the tribespeople as detrimental to their own interests. Their consequent susceptibility to Communist persuasion has been further heightened by a primitive social structure in which each village constitutes a small and already "organized" autonomous unit—a characteristic that facilitates Communist manipulation.

The lowland areas of North Thailand have thus far not been much influenced by the Communist-led insurgency in the far northern hill country, primarily because the lowland Thai identify it as a hill-tribe insurgency with strong links to outside Communist powers. However, this situation now appears to be changing. Since the October 1973 uprising, student and other political activists have intensified their efforts to encourage the lowland Thai farmers to or-

[17] Roger Darling, *Analysis of the Insurgency in Thailand and US/RTG Counterinsurgency Strategy and Programs*, as summarized and interpreted in a separate unclassified report by Robert F. Zimmerman, USOM Research Office, Bangkok, pp. 4-5.

[18] "Government Policy is Leading to Disaster in the Hills," *Bangkok Post*, Jan. 4, 1976, pp. 9-10.



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ganize and bring their grievances to the attention of the government. This has already led to considerable friction between the student-farmer activists and the government authorities in both North Thailand and Bangkok. In mid-1975, for example, activists uncovered and made an issue of the alleged assassination of over 21 farmers belonging to the newly-organized "leftist" Farmers' Federation of Thailand.[19] This increasing politicization of the lowland farmers could well create fertile ground for potential Communist infiltration.

The basic causes of insurgency in Northeast Thailand revolve primarily around poor economic and social conditions—*i.e.*, low wages, land alienation, high land rentals, administrative inefficiency and corruption, and inadequate educational services.[20] But unlike the causes of insurgency in the hill-tribe region of the North, which may be termed *transcendant* because they go beyond the realm of immediate personal welfare and are closely tied to spritual values and goals, the causes of insurgency in the Northeast are *contrived* in that the longstanding grievances of the regional population over poor economic conditions and low living standards might have remained latent had it not been for Communist intervention. As one careful observer has pointed out, the leaders of the Communist insurgency succeeded in manipulating these grievances to their political advantage by "attributing the low standard of living not to the actual paucity of natural resources and population aptitude endowments but to governmental neglect, disinterest, and administrative failing."[21]

This propaganda effort has been supplemented by a sophisticated program of social-political organization which, through the creation of a proliferation of committee and subcommittee positions, provides opportunities for exceptionally broad peasant participation, social mobility, and status achievement.[22] The establishment of such an organizational structure, moreover, offers those who are willing to become Communist *adherents* not only an active part in decision-making at the local level but also new potentialities for attaining leadership roles. Such opportunities appeal to the more immediate personal gain motives of the adherents and appear to stimulate a high-risk motivation comparable to that inspired by more transcendant ethnic causes among the hill tribes of North Thailand. It is possible that in the near future similar transcendant causes may also become a factor in the Northeast if the insurgents, with Pathet Lao support, should try to create an ethnic Thai-Lao call for autonomy or for separation and attachment to their "brother Lao state."

It is worth noting here that the Northeast, besides being the locus of the most organized Communist insurgency in the country, has also served as the home political base of many of Thailand's Socialists and other left-wing politicians and members of Parliament. The current leader of the Socialist United Front (SUF), Klaew Norapati, and the recently deceased Thep Chotinuchit, who led the Economist United Front (EUF), both built their political bases in Northeast Thailand in the late 1950's. In the January 1975 elections, the SUF, the new Socialist Party of Thailand (SPT), and the liberal New Force Party all showed their greatest strength (in terms of elected members of Parliament) in the Northeast.[23]

The causes of Communist insurgency in South Thailand have certain basic similarities to those in the North. Ethnic and linguistic differences between the local population, in this case Malay, and the Thai generate frictions in relations with Thai government officials and contribute to contradictions that the Communists can readily exploit. Religious differences compound the problem. The insurgents, both Communist and non-Communist, and their supporters are predominantly Muslims and see Thai government schools, regulations, and officials as a threat to their traditional way of life.

General Saiyud, who has begun to address the problem of rural insurgency in the most serious and candid terms of any Thai government official, has acknowledged that the only way the government can hope to deal effectively with insurgency and political dissidence in both the North and the South is to grant the ethnic minorities in these areas a greater degree of autonomy. In his view, they must have their own officials, and there must be a governmental restructuring that will allow increased local decision-making responsibility and assure that local laws, regulations, and schooling conform to the special characteristics of the minority populations.

Whatever the underlying causes of social discontent in the different regions of Thailand, however, it is important to recognize that these causes by them-

[19] Katherine Bowie and Brian Phalen, "Who is Killing the Farmers?" *Bangkok Post*, Aug. 17, 1975.

[20] "Insurgency: How Long Can Bangkok Ignore This Spreading Cancer?" *ibid.*, Jan. 26, 1975. See also Somchai Rakjiwit, *op. cit.*

[21] Darling, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

[22] See Somchai Rakjiwit, *op. cit.*, pp. 14-221, for an illuminating description of this organizational structure and process.

[23] In the April 1976 elections these parties suffered heavy losses. However, the setback could be only temporary and does not rule out their future reemergence as political forces of some importance.



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selves were not enough to produce the current widespread Communist insurgency. In fact, despite the existence of various popular grievances, there was in the past a remarkable absence of active anti-government opposition in rural Thailand. This clearly indicates—as Darling has pointed out—that the current insurgency is not a spontaneous uprising by an outraged constituency protesting its dissatisfaction over nondevelopment and neglect, but rather the consequence of some elements "of a generally unproductive rural citizenry" having been "awakened to a new view of a deficient condition." The agency of this awakening in those areas where the Communists have influence, Darling states, has been a leadership skillful in "manipulating causes" to the point where

adherents *have come to accept the credibility of the Chinese [Communist] idea of 'putting a new man on earth', of the peasant's role in society, and [of] the injustice of contemporary governmental systems as explained in Communist terms of contradiction.*[24]

Typically, the potential Communist adherent in Thailand appears to be something of a nonconformist by nature. He also tends to be one of a small minority found at all levels in every society who fall in the category of "political animal" and who seek more than simply expanded economic opportunity and increased material well-being. It is persons of this type —most frequently found among the urban student and intellectual population—who have generally provided the backbone of Asian revolutionary movements, and whom the Communists have particularly sought out as potential adherents. R.W. McColl, in a perceptive essay on contemporary Asian revolutions, puts special emphasis on the role of students:

*Today as never before the number of people under the age of 20 often exceeds the rest of the population. In addition the many new universities and secondary schools are creating a major new source of masses for participatory revolution. Certainly the inceasing frequency and continuation of student riots, even after their violent repression, illustrates the continued importance of youth as a political population.*[25]

Certainly, the experience of Thailand since the student uprising of October 1973, marked as it has been by growing student (as well as nonstudent) activism, confirms this observation. It is important to note, moreover, that as of 1974, 62 percent of the Thai population was under the age of 25, and 43 percent under the age of 15.[26]

Even in rural Thailand, conditions have been becoming more conducive to political activism. The peasant's pattern of social relationships has been changing more rapidly than ever before. He now listens to the radio and travels more often away from his own home village or district to other parts of the country on newly-constructed roads. As a result of this broadening of his horizons, and also because of increasing contacts with student and other political activists going out to the countryside from urban

*Thai students jubilantly ride a commandeered truck in Bangkok on October 16, 1973, after learning that the government had acceded to student demands for a new constitution and elections.*

**—Wide World.**

[24] Darling, *op. cit.*, p. 3. It is important for the reader to bear in mind throughout this discussion that the process described applies primarily, or perhaps only, to insurgent *adherents—i.e.*, those who become active party members and fighters—and not to mere village supporters.

[25] "Geopolitical Themes in Contemporary Asian Revolutions," *The Geographical Review* (New York), July 1975, p. 307.

[26] These figures were cited at a seminar held at USOM-Thailand, Bangkok, in March 1974.



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areas, the rural villager becomes able to make comparisons and to identify disparities between his own condition and that of others. He also hears the political activists explain these disparities in terms that often highlight such factors as official corruption and merchant venality. In such situations, the Communist insurgent cadre has found new opportunities to recruit adherents.

## Communist Resources

Having surveyed the basic causes which the Communists have been able to manipulate in order to gain adherents, let us turn to an examination of the resources they can call upon. These fall into two categories: (1) internal, and (2) external.

In the first category, the CPT organization itself must be counted as an important resource. Since the party has long been clandestine, its upper-level organization is somewhat obscure. However, the Central Committee is believed to have its headquarters somewhere in the Laotian province of Sayaburi, opposite Thailand's Loei Province. Below the Central Committee are four regional committees—Northern, Northeastern, Central and Southern—for the four major geographical subdivisions of Thailand, with each regional committee responsible for operations in its particular area and apparently functioning under rather loose control of the Central Committee. The party's greatest strength, however, lies in its elaborate oganization at the village level in those areas where Communist insurgents are strongly entrenched. An excellent illustration of this organization at its best is the infrastructure that existed in Ban Nakham village, Ubon Ratchathani Province, in 1966. Although government Communist suppression operations destroyed this infrastructure, there is little reason to doubt that it remains typical of Communist practice in areas where the insurgents are in control. The Ban Nakham village organization was headed by a village committee consisting of a chairman, two assistant chairmen, and four other members, with one of the assistant chairmen and the four ordinary members responsible for directing the activities of eight specialized committees of 15-30 members dealing with such matters as youth and military affairs, political propaganda, labor and business, women's affairs, etc. This structure functioned within the village but was responsible to a "zone commander" and two assistant commanders based in the jungle.[27]

Through this apparatus operating at the local level, the Communists have been able not only to recruit and motivate active adherents but also to mobilize sufficient popular support in the major insurgent areas to generate sources of manpower, food, shelter, and finances (in part through local tax levies), and to develop an effective intelligence network. They have also benefited from a certain amount of illicit "assistance" in the form of accommodation or even bribes offered by government officials or by private construction firms engaged in building roads into the insurgent areas. The insurgents have further enhanced their own resource position indirectly by causing the Thai government to expend *its* resources in large-scale suppression operations that have been directed only at the military rather than at the more basic political aspects of the insurgency.

But while the Communists—aided by the mistakes and ineptitude of the military-dominated regimes of the 1960's—have managed to swell the number of their recruits and even to score some substantial military successes, they could not have made the gains they have achieved if they had had to rely on their internal resources alone and had not received significant external support. This support has taken various forms.

For ideological and strategic guidance, the CPT has relied primarily on Communist China. In the original conceptualization and strategic planning stage of the Communist insurgency in Thailand, it was the successful Chinese model of revolution that the Thai Communists decided to follow, and Mao Tse-tung became a sort of surrogate leader for the CPT. In addition, the Chinese—and more recently the North Vietnamese and the Pathet Lao—have provided the Thai Communists with leadership, training, and propaganda support, and to a lesser extent with funds, weapons, and ammunition.

There appear to be several external support systems backing up the Thai insurgency. According to the authoritative report cited earlier, the Chinese run one system out of the South China province of Yunnan to support the hill-tribe insurgency in North Thailand and another through Hong Kong to channel financial support to the CPT Central Committee in Bangkok. (Many observers have wondered whether the Chinese-built road in northern Laos is intended to serve as a conduit for aid to the North Thailand insurgents or as a means of countering North Vietnam-

[27] For a diagram of this structure, see Somchai Rakjiwit, *op. cit.*, p. 101.



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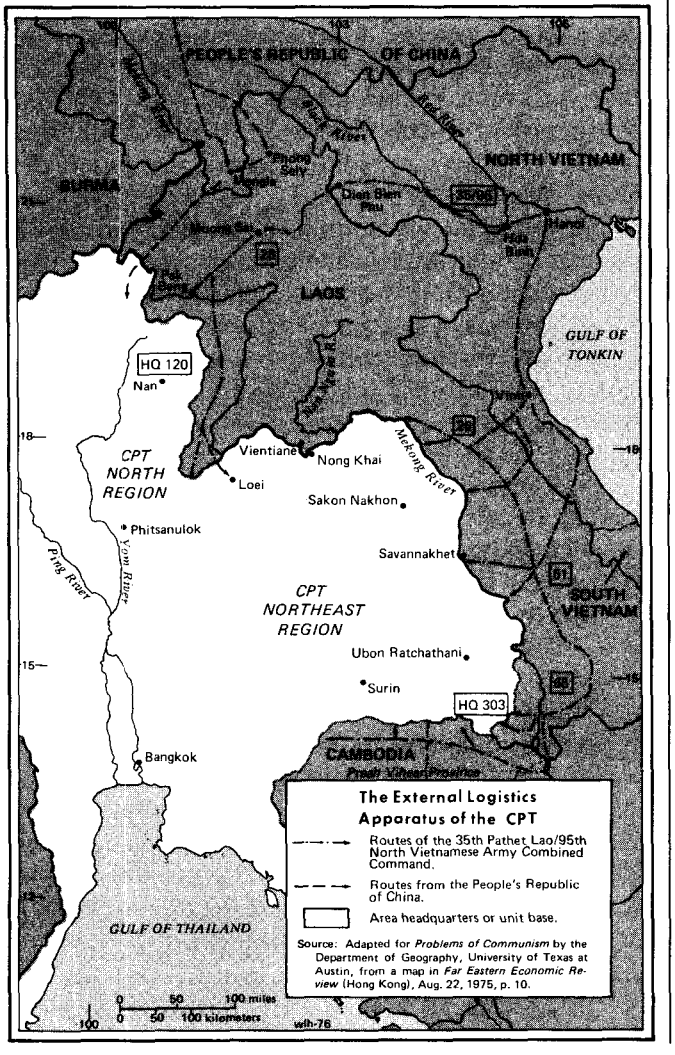
ese influence in the area.) A third, primarily North Vietnamese-run, is used for the movement of weapons and ammunition into North and Northeast Thailand via Laos.[28] A fourth presumably exists to support the Communist insurgency in the South, but information regarding it is lacking.

At the present time, the most important and elaborate apparatus operating in support of the Communist insurgency in Thailand reportedly has its nerve center in the 35th Pathet Lao/95th North Vietnamese Army combined command. This command structure incorporates two overlapping organizations. The 95th NVA command controls and directs overall support operations, while the 35th Pathet Lao command is subordinate; however, both maintain their separate identities and function with parallel chains of command. The central headquarters is based in Hanoi and controls four operational units: Intergroup 28 (a regiment) and three battalions—the 26th, 51st, and 65th. These four units are responsible, each within its own assigned area, for (1) operation of communications and liaison routes between the North Vietnamese and Thai borders through Laos; (2) the actual movement of personnel and supplies through the system; and (3) conducting undercover "armed propaganda" operations and developing the Communist infrastructure in "contested areas" of North and Northeast Thailand. Under item (2), this apparatus has been responsible for moving senior Thai Communist cadres and recruits to North Vietnam and China for training or on party business. By the end of 1974, more than 700 Thai personnel had reportedly received training at Hoa Binh in North Vietnam, and over 300 at Hanoi and Peking, while many more had been trained in Laos, bringing the grand total to over 2,500.[29]




According to the same source, the primary operating responsibility of Intergroup 28 extends from the western border area of North Vietnam near Dien Bien Phu southwestward through the Laotian provinces of Phong Saly, Luang Prabang, Sayaburi, and Vientiane to the Mekong River border of Thailand, where it links up with the CPT's "Northern Region Committee" in charge of the insurgency in North Thailand. After having moved forward in 1969 from Muong Sai, in northern Laos, to a position southwest of Pak Beng close to the Thai border, the group has more recently moved into a secure Communist-controlled area around Phu Wae in the northern Thai province of Nan (see map) and now bears the designation of "Center 120." The three battalions which also form part of the North Vietnamese/Laotian combined command are assigned to other individual sectors along the Thai-Laotian border. The Communist insurgency in Northeast Thailand, for example, receives its external support primarily through a force designated "Headquarters 303," which at least through 1975 was based in the Cambodian province of Preah Vihear. This headquarters has its own transportation unit and a school staffed by North Vietnamese that provides sapper training to Thai insurgents.[30]

Given the paucity of indigenous resources at the disposal of the CPT, these external support systems have been a vital factor in maintaining the Communist insurgency in Thailand. Moreover, in terms of

[28] "How the Communists Get Their Support," *loc. cit.* (See footnote 11.)

[29] *Ibid.*

[30] *Ibid.*



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leadership and morale particularly, outside support appears to be a far more crucial element in the Thai situation than it has been elsewhere in Asia (except in Laos), where external support primarily took the form of arms and funds rather than of actual leadership.

## Objectives and Strategy

In a recent document entitled "The Revolutionary Path for Thailand," the CPT described the current stage of the struggle in Thailand as a "national democratic" and not a "socialist" revolution.[31] From the Communist perspective, Thailand is still a semi-colonial and semi-feudal society which is a victim of three oppressive forces: *imperialism* (under the enormous influence and power of the United States and Japan); *feudalism* (exploitation of the farmers by landlords and middlemen supported by the police power of the state); and *bureaucratic capitalism* (in which an alliance of capitalists and government bureaucrats enjoys monopoly control of economic development and trade).

Thus, the first and immediate objective of the CPT is to carry through to completion the "national democratic" stage of the revolution aimed at breaking the power of these oppressive forces and putting control in the hands of "democratic forces" mobilized and led by the party. The CPT considers it naive to expect that a cabinet and parliament controlled by the present ruling classes will of their own accord carry out such a national democratic revolution—much less a true socialist revolution that would place all means of production in the hands of the state. Hence the necessity for the Communists to adopt a strategy of armed struggle.[32]

This, however, is only the first stage. Although the Communists play upon present inequalities, injustices, popular grievances, and governmental ineffectiveness as a means of gaining adherents, they do not seek merely to reform the existing constitutional and parliamentary system of government and to effect social improvements. Rather, their ultimate goal beyond the "national democratic" stage is the creation of an entirely new, socialist sociopolitical order. For this reason, the Communist insurgency is not likely to be deterred by piecemeal social reform and structural realignment of existing political institutions, although the efforts set in motion by the October 1973 uprising to develop a new constitutional political process in Thailand do nevertheless pose a potential obstacle to the realization of the Communists' objectives.

From this cursory outline of the CPT's revolutionary doctrine, its Maoist and North Vietnamese Communist derivations are readily apparent, and the same holds true for the party's rural-based strategy of armed guerrilla warfare. As early as 1967, a Chinese commentary stated:

*The most important factor in the rapid development of the revolution in Thailand lies in the fact that the Communist Party of Thailand, the core leading the revolution, has been holding aloft the great red banner of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Tse-tung's thought, and adhering to* the revolutionary road of using the countryside to encircle the cities and seizing political power by armed force.[33]

The theme of CPT strategy thus became "the jungle leads the village." This strategy faithfully follows the basic organizational and operational pattern used by the Communists in mainland China from 1928 on and much later by the Communists in North and South Vietnam and by the Pathet Lao in Laos. The CPT resolution of 1952 which first enunciated the "jungle leads the village" strategy to be applied in Thailand was hardly original either in theory or in practice. It said:

*Party organizations or activists must be in the jungle to indoctrinate, train, and supervise village or urban activists. The functions of leading organizations in the jungle may increase depending on how the party grows, so that they can carry on party resolutions, policies, or projects in village activities. In sum, "the jungle" means the party activists who stay in remote areas camouflaged by mountains. "The village" means the local people in remote areas, most of whom are farmers and cultivators, who are led and mobilized to join the revolutionary movement.*[34]

The CPT's emphasis on armed guerrilla struggle has effectively served one of the objectives of its

[31] Jonathan Swift, "The Revolutionary Path," *Bangkok Post*, Sept. 4, 1975.

[32] The all but total elimination of "leftists" from the new Thai Parliament elected in April 1976 has probably reinforced the CPT's belief that armed struggle is its only hope.

[33] New China News Agency, Dec. 27, 1967, trans. in *Survey of the China Mainland Press* (Hong Kong), No. 40-89, p. 35.

[34] Quoted in Somchai Rakjiwit, *op. cit.*, p. 1.



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strategy—*i.e.,* to draw the Thai government into a series of self-initiated and largely military actions. As noted earlier, these actions have primarily been designed to cope with the purely military or "security" threat posed by the insurgency, rather than attacking its social-political causes and thrust. They have not only involved the expenditure of large amounts of resources but have also proven psychologically self-defeating because the insurgents have repeatedly demonstrated their capacity to resume military and political activities in areas which government forces have swept and then left—as has occurred, for example, in certain villages of the Na Kae District of Nakhon Phanom Province.

There are, however, a variety of factors which have impeded the successful prosecution of the Communists' revolutionary strategy for Thailand. Some of these factors are rooted in the traditional Thai culture. Others lie in internal weaknesses of the CPT. And still others have to do with the efforts under way since 1973 to develop a new constitutional political process in Thailand that will offer the nation's citizens a more attractive road to effective participation in national political life than the path of Communist insurgency. Let us turn now to an examination of these factors.

## The Cultural Environment

Certain aspects of the Thai cultural environment have proven notably resistant to Communist efforts to mobilize a militant following—just as they have, for that matter, impeded the recent effort of Thai leaders to build a more broadly-based system of parliamentary democracy. One of these aspects is a traditional political culture characterized by a general attitude of deference toward central government authority, by a lack of political organization and sense of political involvement at the local level, and by a pattern of social relationships not conducive to strong organizational ties and discipline.[35]

The Thai peasant villager has traditionally regarded political matters as the business of the central government, viewing himself as a *phuunooj*—a little person without power and unable to initiate political action, especially action *against* the government.[36] This attitude explains why, in the past, the existence of local grievances failed to generate widespread and sustained political protest, and it is an attitude that the Communists have had to overcome in order to win adherents to insurgency.

Deference to central government authority is closely related to the absence of a tradition of village-level political organization and involvement. The Thai village has never had an autonomous political structure of its own comparable to that of its Vietnamese counterpart, which traditionally had its own village council, tax register, and communal land. One reason for this difference in tradition is that while the belief that each locality has its own spirit is common to both Thailand and Vietnam, this belief has not become institutionalized in Thailand to the degree that it has in Vietnam, where the *dinh* (village temple) contributes to a sense of local individuality and "independence" that has existed over the centuries and still exists today.[37]

In turn, the lack of a tradition of local political participation in Thailand stems in part from the strength of Thai individualism and from a social system whose functioning—as one scholar has suggested—"is ultimately dependent on 'the *quid pro quo* nature' of Thai social relationships."[38] The Thai villager is jealous of his individual freedom, and when he enters into relationships with others and does things for them, he does so in the conscious expectation that they will respond in kind. When they do not do so, he feels free to terminate the relationship at any time—a trait that does not make for stable political group affiliations.

This tendency is further reinforced by the fact that the larger kin group is not as important a social institution in Thailand as it is, for example, in Vietnam. For the Thai, moreover, cremation eliminates the necessity of an immovable tomb that creates an "unbreakable" attachment to a particular ancestral place—which makes it easier for the Thai peasant to move from one locality to another if life becomes difficult and/or confrontation with his neighbors

[35] No student of Thai society has been able to provide a single definition of total Thai cultural values and attitudes that would apply in all areas of the country. The observations presented in this section should therefore be taken as generalizations which, though broadly applicable, are open to exceptions. Interested readers may find more detailed discussion of Thai cultural traits and patterns of action in the works referenced in subsequent footnotes.

[36] See Herbert J. Rubin, "Will and Awe: Illustrations of Thai Villager Dependency Upon Officials," *Journal of Asian Studies* (Ann Arbor, Mich.), May 1973, p. 433; and Somchai Rakjiwit, *Village Leadership in Northeast Thailand,* Bangkok, Military Research and Development Center, 1971, p. xxxii.

[37] See R. B. Smith, "Thailand and Vietnam," *Journal of the Siam Society* (Bangkok), July 1972.

[38] Herbert Phillips, *The Thai Peasant Personality,* Berkeley, University of California Press, 1975, p. 23.



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begins to develop.[39] He is not "trapped" either by kin-group ties or ancestral loyalties and responsibilities that might lead him to seek allies, or develop alliances, to deal with other kin-groups or political-social rivals.

All these factors have contributed to the development of a strong apolitical tradition in rural Thailand —a tradition which stands in sharp contrast to the high degree of politicization found in Vietnam, and one which has served as a significant deterrent to Communist success in the Thai setting. This tradition has drawn added nourishment from a religious philosophy which stresses personal contemplation and detachment from mundane affairs rather than social-political activism.

Thai Buddhism teaches that the ultimate goal of life is the attainment of *nirvana,* a state of spiritual perfection which can be achieved only through the personal acquisition of wisdom. Thus, it is not a religion that provides a motivating force for social or political revolution. As one Western writer on Thailand has observed,

*Buddhist monks at a temple in Thailand.*

**—Marc Riboud/Magnum.**

*Because the search for religious perfection is an individual, moral intellectual quest, ideally free of social influences,* the ideal human is one who transcends but does not reform society. . . . *Individuals are not required to do anything about changing society's rules to better their opportunities to serve others while serving themselves. . . .*[40]

This does not mean that Thai Buddhism rejects all involvement in the affairs of society. Even monks involve themselves in community development projects. However, Thai Buddhism has not positively and actively inculcated a sense of social responsibility that would impel its devotees to engage in organized and disciplined social-political movements aimed at "changing the rules" or obtaining "justice."

Equally significant is the fact that in Thailand there has never been anything comparable to the situation in Vietnam where, as in China, Buddhism coexisted alongside a civil service system based on Confucianism, in which the passing of official examinations on Confucian teachings was the key of admission to the governing bureaucracy. This elitist system had important political consequences. Those who took the examinations but failed to pass them came to form a stratum of educated and politically ambitious semi-elite who were dissatisfied at being denied the positions of status and power to which they had aspired. The result was that some of them became active in local politics and in the formation of secret societies of various kinds.[41] In more recent times, they have provided a source from which the Communists could recruit a potential corps of organized cadres. In Thailand, although Theravada Buddhism also produced an elite, it was a spiritual elite not at all concerned with governmental administration. There has therefore been little inclination on the part of its members to seek an outlet for frustrated ambitions in secret societies—which in fact have no tradition among the Thai as they do among the Chinese and Vietnamese—or in the clandestine organizations maintained by the Communists today.

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[39] Smith, *loc. cit.,* p. 21.

[40] Norman Jacobs, *Modernization without Development: Thailand as an Asian Case Study,* New York, Praeger, 1971, pp. 286-90. Emphasis added.

[41] Smith, *loc. cit.,* p. 70.



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In addition to the cultural factors that have impeded Communist success in Thailand, the Communist Party organization itself has suffered from certain internal weaknesses.

## Communist Weaknesses

The most important of these weaknesses has been the inability of the Communist Party to recruit an adequate body of rural political cadres from among the ethnic Thai—a weakness that is directly related to the generally apolitical cast of rural Thai society and the absence in the rural areas of a dissatisfied and politically conscious intellectual stratum from which the Communists could draw key organizational cadres as they were able to do in Vietnam.

It is important in this context to remember that Thailand's first major Communist organizations appeared in Bangkok, where they were particularly active among the Chinese residents and in some intellectual and academic circles. The first "rural" Communist organizations appeared among Vietnamese expatriates in the Northeast to support the Viet Minh in Indochina, while the CPT, notwithstanding its 1952 decision to adopt the Maoist strategy of rural-based armed struggle, did not really become militarily active in rural Thailand until 1965 and only asserted its leadership of the armed insurgency there in 1966.

Part of the reason for this is simply that Bangkok has always been a far more congenial place to carry on Communist activities, particularly for Thai Communists. Few CPT cadres—or, for that matter, Communist sympathizers among Thai academics and intellectuals—have relished the thought of life in the jungles or rice paddies of rural Thailand. Indeed, it has been characteristic of many Thai Communist leaders, as well as of other dissidents among the intellectual and political elite, to choose exile in Paris or in China in preference to shifting their activities to the Meo hill-tribe country of the North or the Phu Phan mountains of the Northeast. Dr. Somchai Rakjiwit, perhaps Thailand's foremost authority on the organization and operations of the CPT, attributes the party's lack of cadres qualified to carry on mass mobilization work and guerrilla operations in the countryside directly to the cadres' reluctance

*. . . to desert their easy livelihood and careers in town for the hardships of living in the rural areas. For this reason many cadres ignored their obligations to the party, and some who had moved to the countryside but could not bear the hardship there moved back to town or ran away.* [42]

After the government carried out extensive Communist-suppression operations in 1958, including mass arrests in Bangkok, greater numbers of urban party cadres were forced to go into the rural areas as the only alternative to arrest or leaving the country. Even then, however, their urban background ill-prepared them for the task of organizing an effective and secure rural infrastructure. Subsequent government sweeps of rural Communist base areas between 1962 and 1967 were effective at least in disrupting the CPT's communications in and between the villages, demonstrating the basic weakness of this infrastructure.

Perhaps the CPT's second most important handicap had resided squarely in the party's revolutionary strategy and tactical line. The seizure of power by violent revolution against "feudalism," monoply capitalism, and "imperialism" and the eventual installation of a "people's democracy" are goals that simply have not been relevant to the value structure or actual political situation in Thailand. As we have seen, Thai Buddhism generally ties the society together and works against violence-oriented, uncompromising political creeds. In addition, the profound loyalty of the vast majority of Thai to the monarchy, particularly the current King, deprives the Communists of a nationalist cause. Whatever the Communists may say, Thailand is not a colonial country; nor is the present government either a feudalistic or a fascist dictatorship.

A third and particularly exploitable weakness lies in the CPT's ties with the Chinese and Vietnamese Communists. These external linkages belie the party's claim that it stands for Thai nationalism and that its interests are coincident with those of the nation. In addition, in the eyes of the ethnic Thai majority, the CPT's image is not benefited by the party's alliance with rebellious non-Thai in the Northeast, where the Communists try to base some of their appeal on the ethnic Lao character of the population.

From the ethnic standpoint, the makeup of the CPT leadership itself has been another handicap. At least until now, the members of the party's top echelon as well as its leading cadres have been predominantly Chinese or Sino-Thai. As indicated earlier, the CPT has not succeeded in recruiting large num-

[42] Somchai Rakjiwit, *Village Leadership . . . , supra,* pp. 1-2.



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bers of cadres from among the ethnic Thai. Much less has the party produced a Thai equivalent of Vietnam's "Uncle Ho" who might have won the sympathy and support of many non-Communist Thai.

Reference has already been made to the relatively meager internal resources the Communists can mobilize. In one sense, this very fact has tended to strengthen the insurgents by obliging them to strive for self-sufficiency. On the other hand, however, the Communists' whole internal resource mobilization process remains subject to a fundamental weakness —namely, that it rests on a peasant base that is generally less committed and disciplined than the core groups of Communist *adherents.* As we have seen, the behavioral patterns and attitudes of the Thai peasant, heavily influenced by Thai Buddhism, are not conducive to clandestine, rigorous, and sustained commitment and effort to achieve transcendant long-term goals. The villager remains more concerned with his subsistence-level existence than with social movements or causes that he does not perceive as bringing about an immediate improvement in his personal well-being. Thus, the villagers who must be relied upon to support the insurgents with food, money, and shelter do not actually provide a reliable and stable support base. This was dramatically demonstrated in December 1974 when over 200 villagers who had been lured, or perhaps abducted, by the Communists into the Phu Phan mountains of Northeast Thailand escaped *en masse* and sought government protection. They claimed that they had been forced to grow food for the insurgents since early 1974, and that some 2,000 more villagers were still living under duress in the Communists' mountain base area.[43]

*Klaew Narapati, the leader of the Socialist United Front in the 1975 national elections in Thailand.*

**—Kamthorn/*Bangkok Post* via Photoreporters.**

This weakness has been aggravated by the Thai villager's strong individualism and his propensity to break off a relationship whenever he feels that it no longer serves him. The Communists have long had problems with rural recruits, and even with cadres, who desert from the insurgents' jungle strongholds for such reasons as personal disagreement with a group leader, restrictions on love life, or merely the hardships of life in the jungle, which is simply not *sanuk* (fun)—something that the Thai value very highly.

## A Democratic Alternative

The third major deterrent to eventual Communist success in Thailand lies in the current efforts of the country's leaders to lay the foundations of a democratic parliamentary system of government that will provide a viable and more attractive alternative to the Communist blueprint for violent revolution. That the Communists fully realize this is evident from the fact that the CPT has long opposed the development of a meaningful system of representative government. A political process that permits and encourages many political parties to engage in open, legal competition for power on the basis of popular balloting directly undermines one of the Communists' major propaganda themes—*i.e.*, that the Thai government is undemocratic and illegal. Moreover, the party has to fear that free political competition will draw back into the parliamentary process many alienated non-Communist elements with whom the CPT might otherwise hope to develop a revolutionary united front.

Thus, in November 1967, the CPT denounced the Thanom-Praphass government's plans for a new constitution restoring parliamentary government and popular elections in 1968. Calling these plans an attempt to "sidetrack the unity of the revolutionary people," the CPT statement went on to declare:

*These depraved tactics will never deceive the people, [for] the people have clearly understood that the parliamentary and peaceful path cannot resolve the problems of the nation and the people.*[44]

[43] "215 Villagers Escape from Terrorist Hideout," *Bangkok Post*, Dec. 18, 1974, p. 1; Suvit Sora, "Life Behind Red Lines in Na Kae," *ibid.*, Dec. 22, 1974, p. 3.

[44] Quoted in Weatherbee, *op. cit.*, p. 73.



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Again, in July 1968, the CPT bitterly criticized its former Secretary General, Prasert Sabsunthon, for collaborating with the late Thep Chotinuchit, then leader of the Economist United Front (EUF). Thep and EUF Secretary General Klaew Norapati, who later led the Socialist United Front in the 1975 parliament, had been leading spokesmen of the left opposition in the 1958 parliament and again assumed this role during the preparations in 1968 for new parliamentary elections. In attacking Prasert for collaborating with Thep, the CPT assailed the EUF as an attempt to fool the people and accused Prasert of taking a "revisionist" line in defiance of the party's policy of rural armed struggle. The statement declared:

*He [Prasert] opposed our party's policy of armed violence and our preparation for struggle in rural areas. He also suggested that the party follow a peaceful line and shift its struggle to the national assembly in accordance with the law. He even hinted that our party should help another party seize the state power so that we could gain partial access to the democratic process and enjoy limited rights. Once we had achieved this, he said, we could make our move openly and topple the party later when revolutionary conditions were ripe and more favorable.*[45]

The current efforts of the Thai leaders to develop a democratic political process have not brought any change in the party's position as set forth in the July 1968 statement, which flatly declared:

*It is impossible for the revolutionary people to achieve their aim of revolution through peaceful struggle, legal doctrine, or the parliamentary system. On the contrary they must choose armed struggle as the path to topple all reactionary influence.*

These declarations obviously reflect the CPT's recognition that open parliamentary politics do in fact offer an alternative route to effective political participation for people who might otherwise be tempted or persuaded to become cadres for the party—people like Klaew in the past or members of today's new Socialist Party of Thailand, as well as those academics and intellectuals who lean to the left in their prescriptions for solving Thailand's development problems. Moreover, the CPT leadership has greater reason to be seriously concerned over this prospect in 1976 than it had in 1967-68, when political power still remained, to a larger degree than it does today, in the hands of the longstanding bureaucratic cliques. The current political process in Thailand is no longer the exclusive preserve of the elite. The old cliques of the Thanom era do not now rule Thailand or dominate parliament on their own terms, although some elements thereof have not stopped trying.

The last statement remains valid even though the recent April 1976 parliamentary elections resulted in a resounding victory for the centrist and some conservative parties, chiefly at the expense of their leftist rivals. In the center, the Democrat Party of new Prime Minister Seni Pramoj increased its representation in Parliament from 72 (after the January 1975 elections) to 115, and ex-Premier Kukrit's Social Action Party (although he himself was defeated) went from 18 to 45 seats. The conservative Thai Nation Party also rose from 28 to 56 seats, but the more conservative Social Justice Party (with some old clique connections) had its representation reduced from 45 to 28. On the other hand, the Left suffered sweeping losses: the SPT and SUF, which together held 25 seats in the 1975 parliament, were reduced to only three seats between them, while the left-of-center New Force Party dropped from 12 to three.[46]

On balance, the elections appear to have created a potentially more favorable environment for the development of constitutional government in Thailand than the fragmentation and polarization that prevailed toward the end of Kukrit's tenure. Premier Seni's new coalition government needs the parliamentary backing of only two or three parties instead of the 19 required by Kukrit's and should therefore prove more stable and more capable of tackling the pressing problems of social and economic development facing the country. That in itself bodes well for continuation of the trend toward a viable constitutional political process.

Admittedly, it remains to be seen whether the rejected leftists will now be more susceptible to Communist ideology, organization, and discipline and will retreat into the jungles to join the Communists, or whether they will choose to rebuild their influence through peaceful and responsible protest. Even though they appear much weaker after the recent elections, the liberal and leftist parties still enjoy considerably greater opportunity to develop power

[45] See *ibid.*, pp. 77-78.

[46] Election figures provided by the Royal Thai Embassy, Washington, DC, April 7, 1976.



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bases among the people than they did under the pre-1973 political system. They may therefore see their best hope in continuing on the path of parliamentarism—especially since the election results suggest that the Thai public at large has grown weary of the political violence that arose from the Right-Left polarization. However, a repetition of events like the assassination of SPT leader Boonsanong Punyodyana or of rightist-inspired acts of intimidation against leftist political activists could possibly influence them in the opposite direction.[47]

The prospects for the further development of constitutional democracy have also been improved in recent years by significant progress in the direction of increased local autonomy. In mid-1975, the Kukrit government launched a Village Subsidy Program which marked the first time in Thailand's history that the central government moved to transfer some of its resources to the village level and to place control of those resources in the hands of the local authorities themselves. At the same time, the government began implementing a new "Volunteer Self-Development and Protection" (*Aw Paw Paw* in Thai) counter-insurgency program providing for a massive expansion of village militia forces as well as for major increases in the flow of resources directly to the villages. More important, this program moved to strengthen the representative character of village governments by providing for the local election of three assistants to the traditional village headman (who himself is to be elected on a periodic basis rather than for life as hitherto) and to open the way for broader local public participation in community development.[48] Although the Kukrit government has now been replaced, these programs will probably be continued, or modified only slightly, by its successor.

These changes at the local level appear to provide increased opportunities for political participation and the exercise of local autonomy, thereby undermining the Communist claim that the central government is a dictatorship and an exploiter of the people. It nevertheless remains true that channels for upward mobility to the district, provincial, and national levels within the Thai political system are still lacking. Theoretically, the political parties could fill this gap in the future if they organize down to the local level and create ladders whereby their adherents can move higher in the party organizations, thus developing a process parallel to that which only the Communists currently offer. A Communist village-level political cadre can expect over the long term to advance his position in the party hierarchy on the merits of his performance.

Meanwhile, the more open politics of the past two years and a half have brought a remarkable rise in the political consciousness of the masses of ordinary Thai citizens. With the help of student activists working among them, farmers and laborers—the *phuunooj* referred to earlier—have been organizing for political action in a manner unprecedented in Thailand. It no longer seems true that the Thai peasant or common laborer "fears the Prince as the rat fears the cat."[49] Moreover, pressures exerted by these newly-organized groups have proven effective in moving the government to address many unresolved problems of injustice. In the past two years, virtually every province in the country has witnessed student and farmer protests that have resulted in the transfer or firing of corrupt government officials, including police chiefs. Addressing the Asia Society in New York in September 1975, Boonchu Rojanasathien, then Finance Minister in the Kukrit government and deputy leader of the Social Action Party, saw these groups acting as "the conscience of Thai society" and called their demonstrations "the healthiest thing that could have occurred in our society."[50]

## Risks and Dangers

But while the emerging democratic political process in Thailand holds considerable potential for diminishing the appeal of Communist insurgency to those who have felt alienated and disenfranchised under the existing political system, substantial risks and dangers still remain.

For one thing, the transfer of a real share of resources and self-governing power to the villages can be expected to result in increased political activity at the local level, which in turn is likely to lead to increased frictions between groups, families, political parties, etc. In this sense, a multiplication of rice-roots political organizations and parties could turn out to be an aspect of "democracy" more harm-

[47] Lewis M. Simmons, "Thai Left Fears More Killings," *The Washington Post* (Washington, DC), March 1, 1976, p. 1.

[48] "Revolt at the Rice Roots . . . ," *loc. cit.*, p. 11.

[49] A phrase attributed to Colonel Phya Sonsuradacha, one of the leaders of the first *coup d'état* against the old absolutist Thai monarchy in 1932. See Kamol Somvichien, *Thai Political Culture and Political Development*, trans. by Robert F. Zimmerman, USOM-Thailand, 1973, p. 11.

[50] From excerpts published in the *Bangkok Post*, Sept. 3, 1975.



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ful to the stability of village life than the absence of such organizations in the past. The tensions thus created might offer the Communists greater opportunities to win new recruits, while the formation of new village-level organizations may also create openings for Communist subversion that hitherto did not exist.

At the same time, the recent expansion of the organizational and agitational efforts of students and other political activists has given rise to a mushrooming of popular expectations. If the emerging political system cannot satisfy these expectations, there is the danger that the resultant frustrations may drive more people into extremist camps of Left or Right. Seksan Prasertkul, a leader of the 1973 student uprising, referred to this danger in a statement made on the heels of the uprising:

*People want the constitution, want real democracy, so much that if they are not patient and politicians do not aim our new democratic system at solving the nation's problems, . . . those who fought for democracy will abandon the ideals they fought for and turn instead toward one of two extremes: left-wing dictatorship or right-wing dictatorship.*[51]

The very existence of so many newly-organized activist groups of students, farmers, and laborers itself multiplies the potential targets of Communist subversion, making the pursuit of a united front strategy by the CPT more viable than ever before. In the context of such a policy, the student and academic activists—the potential political leaders of tomorrow—are an especially inviting target for the Communists since their activities, while centered in Bangkok, also fan out into the rural areas where the Communists have so far concentrated their major effort.

The dramatic increase in the political activism of the urban student and intellectual community of the capital poses the further question of a possible switch in Communist tactics in favor of an attempt to seize power at the center through urban insurgency. The CPT, it must be remembered, originated in Bangkok and only shifted over to jungle-based insurgency in the mid-1960's, partly because the Sarit and Thanom governments effectively controlled Communist activities in the capital. Given the new opportunities that exist today, the party could well decide to combine urban revolutionary tactics with rural insurgency.

A major consideration is that Bangkok is the organizational center of Thailand. It is the home base of the student activist organizations that played such a key role in the October 1973 uprising; the current roster of these organizations includes the National Student Center of Thailand, the Anti-Dictatorship Front, the Federation of Independent Students, and the People for Democracy Group. It is also the center of the labor movement, which is heavily concentrated in Central Thailand and which has been particularly receptive to the organizational and agitational activities of the student organizations. (It is important to note, in addition, that Bangkok is the headquarters of many of Thailand's most influential Sino-Thai businessmen, some of whom may well have pro-Communist sympathies because of the CPT's Chinese ties.)

There is, moreover, a close interaction between political currents in the capital and in the rest of the country. In most instances, the key organizers of public protest demonstrations almost everywhere in Thailand have been political activists from the capital who go out to the rural areas by private cars or hired busses. After carrying out their agitational work in the countryside, they return to Bangkok, often with several busloads of farmers in tow so that they can stage a rally before the gates of the Parliament building.

In the light of these new conditions, it is not inconceivable that the CPT leadership may be thinking

*Some of Thailand's 20,000 striking postal workers rally outside the General Post Office in Bangkok in September 1975.*

**—Michael Tunnyo/Keystone.**

[51] Claudia Ross, "Why Thailand is at a Very Crucial Stage," *Bangkok Post*, Oct. 28, 1973, p. 13.



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that the party has better and more imminent prospects of gaining power through a Communist-instigated putsch in Bangkok than through a rural insurgency that progressively weakens urban links to the countryside, as happened in China and in North and South Vietnam. After all, the student organizers of the 1973 uprising "mobilized" over 400,000 supporters in one week and chased the ruling government from power—something that the Communist insurgents in the rural areas have not even come close to accomplishing after ten years of activity.

One can conceive of two possible scenarios. The Communists could attempt to instigate another 1973-type mass uprising, combined with the use of terror tactics, which would create such chaos and upheaval in Bangkok that the conservative anti-Communist government leaders—as in South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia—might give up and flee into exile, enabling the Communists to seize power by means of an immediate putsch. The second scenario has two possible variations. Either the Communists could stir up disorder in Bangkok on the calculation that this would provoke a right-wing coup which, even if it succeeded in restoring law and order temporarily, would further alienate the left-wing political activists and thereby enhance the Communists' longer-term prospects of gaining power through a leftist united front under CPT leadership. Or, alternatively, they could try to take advantage of disturbances resulting from the actions of right-wing elements designed to pave the way for a coup of their own. (In the latter context, some observers wonder whether the Boonsanong assassination—if it was indeed the work of rightists as suggested in press reports,[52] though Boonsanong had enemies on all sides—might not have been intended to cause chaos as a justification for a possible right-wing coup.) Either of these two latter possibilities could serve the Communists' longer-term objectives by intensifying the frustration and radicalism of the left-wing political forces.

Finally, all these dangers seem likely to be intensified as a consequence of the Communist successes in Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia. These successes have undoubtedly served to impart fresh inspiration to the Thai Communists by showing them what determination and perserverance can accomplish. Moreover, while they have every reason to expect that any US support for the Thai government will be nowhere near that provided to the non-Communist forces in Indochina, they themselves can look forward to more external support than ever before. The flow of arms to the insurgents in the North and Northeast has already begun to increase, and Pathet Lao and Cambodian Khmer Rouge forces have clashed with Thai government forces on several occasions along the Mekong River and even on the Thai side of the Cambodian border.

Thailand also appears certain to become an arena of intensified competition among outside Communist rivals for influence over the Thai Communist movement. The earlier-mentioned infiltration of 150-200 Chinese ex-PLA soldiers into North Thailand in 1971 could well prove a harbinger of heightened Vietnamese-Chinese competition for influence not only there but in other insurgency areas. The Chinese, moreover, evidently fear that the Soviets may be trying to work through or with the Vietnamese Communists in an effort to extend Soviet influence along China's southern periphery, and they are reportedly even cautioning the Thai government against cutting off ties with the US too quickly, doubtless for fear that this would facilitate an extension of Vietnamese-Soviet influence in the area. For their part, the Vietnamese may see the insurgency in Thailand as providing an excellent opportunity to expand their influence beyond Indochina and thereby strengthen their capability to resist Chinese pressures in Southeast Asia. It follows, in any event, that the Vietnamese do not wish to see this opportunity diminished by Thai success in developing a viable democratic political process that would undercut the Thai Communist insurgency and stand out in favorable contrast to Communist political processes in Indochina.

Already in the spring of 1975, before the Communists had yet completed their conquests of South Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia, evidence emerged of possible future North Vietnamese strategy vis-à-vis Thailand. A document turned over to the Thai authorities by a North Vietnamese defector, excerpts of which were published in the Bangkok press,[53] outlined a joint North Vietnamese/Pathet Lao plan to try to induce the Thai government to agree to the establishment of a "neutral regime" in an area 50 to 100 miles deep along the Mekong River border near Vientiane, which would provide an "autonomous zone" for the ethnic Thai-Lao in Northeast Thailand. The document went on to shed revealing light on the calculations behind this strategy:

[52] Lewis M. Simons, "Thai Socialist Leader Assassinated," *The Washington Post*, Feb. 29, 1976, p. A-8.

[53] "Document Discloses Hanoi's Intentions Towards Thailand," *Bangkok Post*, March 30, 1975, p. 13.



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*A Pathet Lao soldier washes his uniform on the banks of the Mekong River in Laos.*

**—Lynda Scarth/Camera Press.**

*We expect to negotiate an agreement permitting the establishment of a neutral regime bordering the Mekong River in return for suspension of military operations in the Northeast. The existing civilian regime will not be able to survive such a blow, and although there will be repression by a military regime of the progressive forces, we are prepared to accept this if it enables us to liberate the west bank of the Mekong Valley. Also, a return to military dictatorship in Thailand will strengthen the progressive forces by clearly showing the futility of nonrevolutionary approaches and increasing the control of these forces maintained by the Thai [Communist] party.*

The "protectorate" envisaged in this document happens to include most of the area in the lower Mekong River basin where the United Nations Mekong Committee has planned, begun, or already built dams for hydroelectric power affecting Northeast Thailand as well as parts of Laos and Cambodia. Total Communist control of the Mekong River area not only would dramatically bolster the development prospects of Indochina but would also enable the Vietnamese and Pathet Lao to slow economic development in Northeast Thailand, where a large share of the hydroelectric power was to go. The North Vietnamese apparently also calculated that a temporary agreement to cease military activity in Northeast Thailand would not close their option to renew armed struggle later if this proved necessary to attain their objectives.

More recent evidence suggests that this strategy, though not yet implemented, has not been abandoned. Two Pathet Lao soldiers arrested by Thai police in Nong Khai in January of this year after they had fled across the Thai border from Laos to escape "very strict rules and regulations and stiff penalties for disobedience," as well as poor food, pay, and living conditions, claimed that the Pathet Lao forces had been told "to be patient and they will lead a comfortable life in the next three years when they take over Thailand's northeastern provinces."[54]

The North Vietnamese may or may not succeed in their reported plans to detach part of Northeast Thailand. The important point is that even by trying—whether through a negotiated agreement or through stepped-up support to the Communist insurgency

[54] "1979 Deadline for 'Takeover of Northeast,' " *ibid.*, Jan. 5, 1976, p. 1.



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within Thai borders—they can keep Thailand in a state of weakness which would prevent it from posing any threat to North Vietnamese pretensions to a position of political and psychological predominance in Southeast Asia.

## Outlook

In the preceding analysis, we have attempted to provide a broad overall picture of Communist insurgency in Thailand—its origins and scope, the internal cultural and political factors that affect its capabilities, and the external factors that also have a vital bearing on its prospects of success. Admittedly, there are many crucial aspects of the situation that remain obscure, but on the basis of the evidence assembled here, what tentative conclusions can be drawn?

One conclusion that seems warranted by the evidence is that a Communist insurgency in Thailand drawing almost exclusively on an indigenous resource base and receiving little more than propaganda and limited material support from outside sources would pose little threat to the Thai body politic. Unfortunately, however, the threat that Thailand faces today does not appear subject to such hard-and-fast limitations. The key word here is "appear." We cannot clearly delineate the nature and scope of *voluntary* mass support within Thailand for the indigenous Communist insurgents, although there is much to suggest that such support is both limited and unstable. Moreover, because we cannot determine the extent of local popular support for the insurgency, we cannot reach firm conclusions as to how crucial external backing is to Communist success. Again, however, there is much to suggest that the CPT, given its internal weaknesses, is far more dependent on outside Communist support than most other Communist insurgencies or movements in Asia.

If this judgment is correct, the final answer to the question of whether or not the Communist insurgency in Thailand will succeed or fail—and, indeed, the answer to the whole question of Thailand's political future—would appear to depend as much on the intentions of Hanoi, and possibly of Peking and Moscow as well, as it does on the intentions and ambitions of the CPT. Of particular concern over the next two to five years, therefore, will be the nature and scope of Hanoi's intentions. Does Hanoi really want to effect a Communist takeover of Thailand, or of parts of Thailand? Or does it merely want to keep Thailand in a position where it cannot challenge Hanoi's pretensions to a dominant position in Southeast Asia?



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# Philippine Communism

## By Tillman Durdin

When President Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law and inaugurated dictatorial rule in the Philippines in September 1972, he gave as one justification for his action the need to crush a Communist rebellion which, he claimed, was threatening—in alliance with other anti-Marcos elements—to overthrow his government.[1] By moving vigorously to arrest Communists and their supporters (though top Communist leaders managed to evade his sweeps), he succeeded in dealing the movement a heavy blow, disrupting its cells, urban sanctuaries, and the flourishing network of united front organizations that had been so useful to the Communists in promoting popular support and public activities.

The conventional wisdom of many who disapproved of Marcos' move to dictatorship was that the setback to the Communists would be only temporary. It was predicted that Marcos would fail to improve the lot of the Filipinos and that growing poverty and his suppression of civil liberties would eventually bring about the polarization of Philippine society. In the classical Marxist pattern, it was argued, the liberal bourgeoisie and liberal intellectuals would join the masses and the Communists in opposition to Marcos' oligarchic military rule, forcing a revolutionary situation that would generate an uprising and bring a Communist or at least a Communist-manipulated leftist regime to power. This was also the viewpoint purveyed in Communist underground literature after the Marcos coup.[2]

Today, nearly four years after Marcos' proclamation of martial law, there are signs of the predicted polarization, but it is not yet sufficiently sharp to create the anticipated revolutionary situation. Communists of both the violently militant and the more restrained types persist on the Filipino scene, but at present they are nowhere near menacing enough to shake the Marcos regime. However, the Communists do remain a threat to the status quo. The Stalinist "two-camp" polarization theory could still turn out to have validity. It is the basis, at least, on which scattered, hunted Communist militants continue to survive and to strive, against heavy odds and under brutal conditions, for what they hope will be their day of vindication.

The precise path that Philippine Communists intend to follow in achieving revolutionary change in their country varies depending on the kind of Communist delineating the way. As elsewhere in the world, there are today in the Philippines two branches of communism—a Moscow-oriented group and a Peking-leaning faction—each with differing policies and programs. In order to understand these differences, let us first examine very briefly their origins in the history of the Communist movement in the Philippines from World War II to Marcos' declaration of martial law in September 1972.

## Origins of a Split Movement

The Moscow-liners, known simply as the Philippines Communist Party (*Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas*—PKP), are today but a vestige of the tough, vigorous movement that surged forth to menace the Manila government in the early 1950's. In coopera-

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[1] See David Roth, "The Deterioration and Reconstitution of National Political Parameters: The Philippines During the 1970's," *Asian Survey* (Berkeley), September 1973, pp. 812-25; and *The New York Times*, Sept. 23-25, 1972.

[2] For example, an October 1972 directive of the Maoist portion of the Philippine Communist movement revealed a shift from the former basically class analysis of revolutionary potential to one emphasizing enlistment of the bourgeoisie, religious groups, professionals, military men, and "all those interested in achieving national freedom and democracy"—that is, all disaffected by the Marcos dictatorship—in a revolutionary endeavor together with the Communists against Marcos. See *Ang Bayan* (Manila?), Oct. 12, 1972, pp. 10-13.



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tion with forces of the nationalistic Hukbalahap (*Hukbong Bayan Laban Sa Hapon,* or People's Army Against the Japanese), PKP bands gained tremendous strength as guerrilla fighters against the Japanese during World War II. As in other Southeast Asian countries, the PKP followed Moscow-Peking directives after the war to strike for armed seizures of power, while war-weary Western nations progressively yielded control of their Southeast Asian colonial territories to independence movements.

Misguided by Stalin into breaking with their wartime nationalistic but non-Communist allies, a PKP army of 14,000 guerrillas did gain control of much of Central Luzon and even reached the gates of Manila in 1952. But in the end they were shattered by military and political action undertaken by Ramon Magsaysay, first as Secretary of Defense and afterward as President. On October 18, 1952, Magsaysay captured most members of the PKP's Politburo in a surprise raid on their secret Manila hideout. He then progressively defeated the guerrilla bands in the field.

Slow disintegration of the PKP followed. Its guerrilla groups lost much of their ideological élan and operated pretty much as extortionist bandits in the Central Luzon countryside. Luis Taruc, the legendary Supreme Commander, capitulated. Politburo chief Jesús Lava was arrested in 1964. Pedro Taruc, Luis' cousin, carried on in remoter peasant villages of Luzon but eventually died of wounds and disease. Faustino del Mundo for more than a decade led bands in terroristic, racketeering activities around the US Clark Airforce Base, but in 1973, after 36 of his group commanders had either been killed or captured, del Mundo, or Commander Sumulong as he was known, turned himself over to Marcos; he is now in prison. The PKP guerrillas had by then become an embarrassment to anyone of genuine Communist faith.

In the meantime, the Sino-Soviet split has occurred, rupturing the joint Peking-Moscow leadership under which world Communists had been operating. In a natural development, a guerrilla faction of the old party including most of the fighters and headed by Bernabe Biscayno (known as Commander Dante) broke away in 1968 and, together with a young ideological leader in Manila, José Ma Sison, formed a new, Peking-focused party at a Congress of Reestablishment believed held in Capas, Tarlac Province, from December 26, 1968, to January 7, 1969.[3] The PKP faded into insignificance and abandoned violence as a policy.

The militant new "purist" and Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines/Marxist-Leninist (CPP/ML) attracted increasing support as the PKP declined into ineffectiveness. Sison, the chairman of the CPP/ML, went to Peking for education. Under the party name of Amado Guerrero (Beloved Warrior), he published a "bible" for Filipino Communists entitled *Philippine Society and Revolution,*[4] which borrowed heavily from Mao Tse-tung and D. N. Aidit, at that time Chairman of the Indonesian Communist Party.

While Commander Dante expanded CPP/ML armed forces (the New People's Army—NPA) among the poverty-ridden peasantry of Luzon, Sison—who before becoming a Communist activist had been a student and lecturer at the University of the Philippines—won many new party members and organized a host of fellow travelers from among the intellectuals of Manila and other cities in the united front organizations. Chaotic, crime-ridden, economically depressed, and corrupt under elected demagogic leaders beholden to an entrenched, oligarchic elite, the Philippines in the late 1960's and the early 1970's even turned many moderates toward communism as a possible way out.

In such a setting, the line of "new democracy" or "national communism"—borrowed by the CPP/ML from Mao Tse-tung's temporary "new democracy" program propagandized in China in the period immediately before Mao's victory—was attractive to non-Communist malcontents. The CPP/ML appealed to workers, peasants, intellectuals, members of the liberal bourgeoisie, and others to join the Communists in achieving power and in forming a government of national coalition committed to the usual freedoms of democratic socialism.

Receptivity to such appeals increased after Marcos, through massive expenditures, got himself reelected President in 1969 for an unprecedented second term. This event opened Marcos to intensified attack by opponents from both Left and Right, who criticized him for seeking to perpetuate his power and for being unable to curb corruption, the private armies of warlord-politicians, and an obstructive Congress. The powerful Lopez family and other wealthy oligarchs hostile to Marcos began to play indirectly with the leftists in their efforts to ruin the President. The oligarchy-controlled press, radio, and

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[3] Justus M. van der Kroef, "Philippine Communist Theory and Strategy: A New Departure?" *Pacific Affairs* (Vancouver), Summer 1975, pp. 181-98.

[4] Manila, Pulang Tala Publications, 1971.



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TV; numerous opposition Congressmen, senators, and intellectuals; the underground but active Communists and their fellow travellers—all these elements joined in whipping up anti-Marcos feeling as well as nationalist sentiment aimed at American influence, US military bases, and other Philippine ties with "US Imperialism," with the objective of creating conditions increasingly difficult for Marcos to control. The President and his wife Imelda, a former beauty queen, were personally attacked almost daily in the media. Anti-Marcos and anti-American demonstrations became regular occurrences. Youthful, Communist-manipulated marchers were sometimes checked by force only at the gate of the American Embassy. The anti-Marcos atmosphere was hardly improved when grenade explosions widely attributed to agents of Marcos shattered an opposition Liberal Party rally in Manila's Plaza Miranda in August 1971, killing several onlookers and injuring Senator José Diokno and numerous other opposition leaders.

By this time, Marcos strongly suspected that his Communist enemies at home were receiving assistance from Peking, which was regularly broadcasting enthusiastic reports of victories by NPA guerrilla forces. These suspicions were heightened in July 1972 when government forces battled NPA fighters to seize a small ship grounded off the coast of Northeast Luzon and to confiscate caches of hand weapons, discovered on shore, which the vessel apparently had been trying to deliver to the Communist bands in the nearby mountains of Isabela Province.[5]

Indeed, surveying the situation in the Philippines in the summer of 1972, one finds considerable evidence, as Marcos proclaimed in September, that diverse forces, using clever tactics and propaganda, had succeeded in fomenting a revolutionary situation. In the final period before declaring martial law, Marcos may have exaggerated and even abetted this situation in order to justify a coup that was already planned, but the state of affairs was one that, together with the gathering Moslem revolt in Mindanao, genuinely threatened his regime.

## A Changing Environment

Since the coup was carried out in September 1972, there have been marked changes in the conditions—both domestic and international—affecting the activities and prospects of the Communist organizations of the Philippines. At home, Marcos has carried through a program of land reform which, though limited, has made the Philippine peasantry in many areas less susceptible to Communist appeals.[6] The urban workers and the urban poor, however, have fared less well. Pay increases have been small, and because of inflation real incomes have declined. In general, though, the Marcos dictatorship has been less repressive than might have been expected—light-handed enough and successful enough in overall economic and political management to be widely accepted as preferable to the insecure, rudderless situation that prevailed prior to martial law. Bitterness that could work to the advantage of the Communists is general among intellectuals, among those who had been political activists under the old order, and among laborers and sections of the bourgeoisie outside circles of privilege. But polarization is still limited, and a revolutionary mood is lacking.

Internationally, Marcos has diminished military and economic reliance on the United States, strengthened ties with Japan and with his regional neighbors through ASEAN (The Association of Southeast Asian States—comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand), and taken an "opening to the left" by initiating relations with Communist countries. New agreements under negotiation governing the US military bases at Clark Field and Subic Bay may result in a less autonomous American military presence and a greater emphasis on Philippine sovereignty in operation of the bases. The American economic stake in the Philippines, worth $2 billion, is still huge but is declining in proportion to domestic capital and investments of Japanese and other foreign nationals.[7] Marcos is thus becoming less vulnerable to Communist propaganda both at home and abroad about the grip of "American imperialism" on his regime and is in a better position to assert an independent, nationalistic, multilateral, Third World foreign policy line that would doubtless

[5] See reports in *The New York Times*, July 11 and 16, 1972, and in *The Manila Times*, July 11-22, 1972.

[6] The land reform affects only corn and rice lands totaling 1,422,988 hectares with some 914,914 tenants. Landlords owning seven or less hectares can retain ownership but must give tenants permanent leases and collect no more than 25 percent of crops as rent. The state is seizing holdings in excess of seven hectares, compensating the landlords, and turning ownership over to the tenants, from whom it will collect over a long term. Nearly 400,000 tenants are getting direct ownership, while more than 500,000 are obtaining leases (many of which may turn into actual ownership as owners grow dissatisfied with irrevocable leasing). The program should benefit nearly a million rural dwellers out of a total rural labor force of some 8 million. (The latter figure includes many petty owners but also hundreds of thousands of landless laborers; others are tenants on coconut, sugar, abaca, fruit, and other landlord-owned lands.)

[7] Estimates provided by the US Embassy in Manila.



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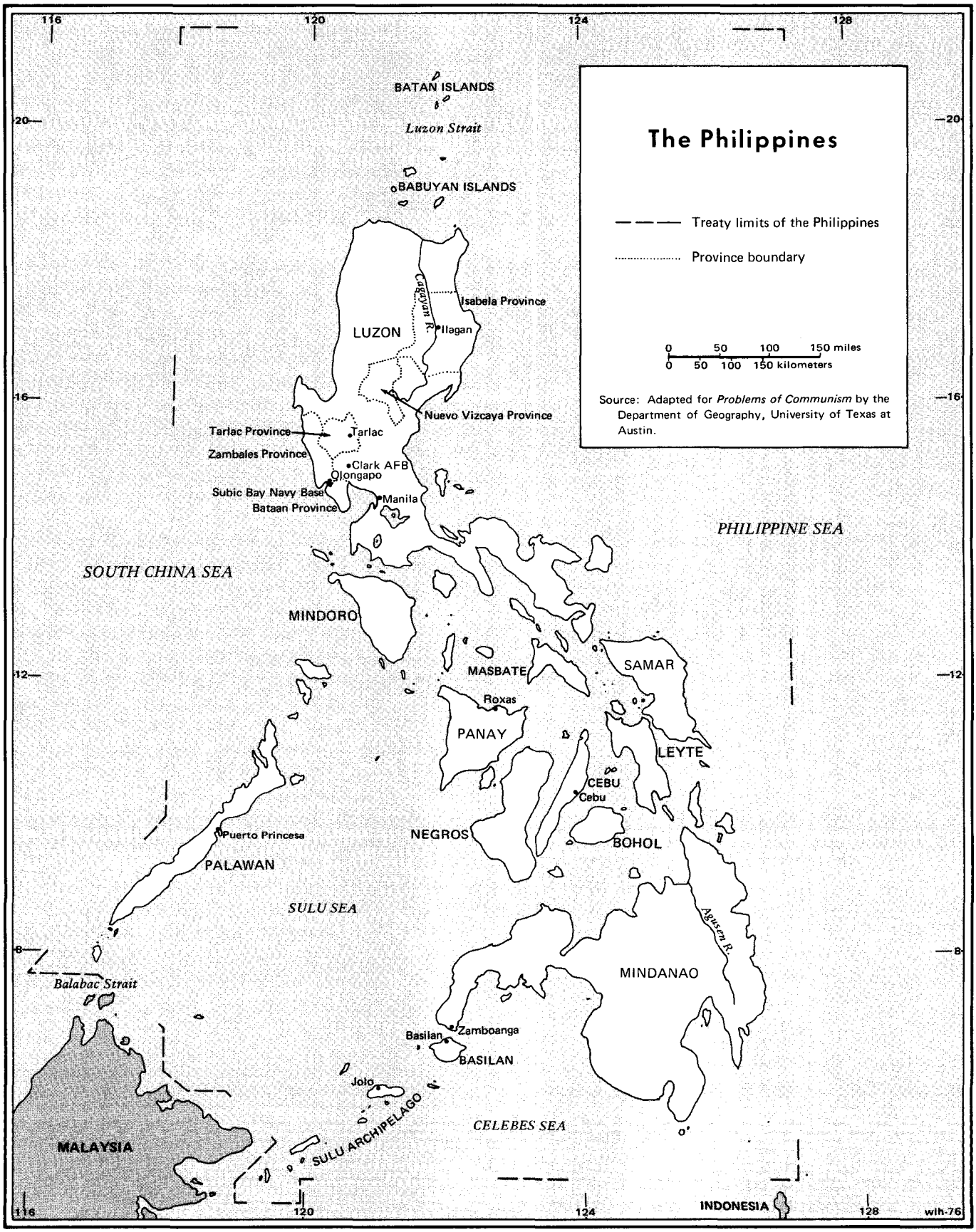


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*Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos (seated left) and Chinese Premier Chou Enlai (seated right) sign the Joint Communiqué on the occasion of the establishment of formal relations between the Philippines and the People's Republic of China in Peking in June 1975.*

**—Wide World.**

have the approval of the major Communist powers.

Most important for the position of communism in the Philippines has been Marcos' development of relations with China and the Soviet Union. This has put the two big Communist powers in a public posture of accepting and dealing with a Marcos dictatorship which they have denounced in the past and which most Filipino Communists oppose. It has also put official Chinese and Soviet representatives in the Philippines in a position to work with—or scheme against—the Marcos regime. For the USSR, the new situation has been less involved than for China. This is because the weak PKP, after the Marcos takeover, adopted a policy of "open and legal" united front struggle, whereas the CPP/ML continued illegally to combine united front tactics with guerrilla warfare and acts of terrorism aimed at the forceful overthrow of the Marcos government.

In an interview with the writer in late 1975, President Marcos said that when he had gone to Peking at mid-year to establish relations, both Mao Tse-tung and Chou En-lai had assured him there would be no interference in Philippine affairs by either the Chinese government or the Chinese Communist Party. Marcos said he accepted and was satisfied with the assurances. In promising to keep the CCP's hands off the Philippines (if Marcos heard correctly), the Peking leaders went further than they have with other Southeast Asian countries. Toward Malaysia and Burma, for example, they have equivocated—giving assurances of no government interference but saying that the CCP's dealings with fraternal parties are, in effect, people-to-people relationships for which the Peking government is not responsible.[8]

Interestingly enough, just before Marcos went to Peking, US border agents caught an American Filipino courier from the Chinese Embassy in Ottawa attempting to enter the United States from Canada with a large sum of money which (documents showed) was intended for transfer through the US to the CPP/ML.[9] The US Embassy in Manila informed Marcos of the incident. In view of this and past Chinese aid to Philippine insurgents, it is doubtful whether Marcos is privately as content with Peking's assurances as he says he is.

Subsequent to the Marcos visit to Peking, the PRC set up its new embassy in Manila with a staff of 15 headed by Ambassador K'o Hua. The embassy installed itself in the building on Roxas Boulevard that formerly housed the Nationalist Chinese mission and

[8] Philippine officials give this assessment of assurances from Peking to Burma and Malaysia. They tend to be confirmed by statements to the writer by Burmese officials, and there are reliable press reports attributing similar statements to Malaysian officials. It is an acknowledged fact in Rangoon that material aid from China goes into North Burma for Communist rebels there. It is doubted that similar aid goes to the Malaysian Communists, but China continues to encourage and support the Malaysian insurgents by broadcasts from China.

[9] The courier, Miss San Juan, was recently convicted in a Long Island court of breaking currency laws by not declaring the $77,000 she carried when crossing from Canada to the United States.



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has gone assiduously about developing a presence and establishing Chinese influence in the Philippines by promoting trade; by staging art, movie, and acrobatic shows from China; by cultivating local officials; and by trying to build links with the half-million still largely pro-Nationalist Chinese in the Philippines.

Notwithstanding these public linkages and the assurances given to Marcos in Peking, it is unlikely that the Chinese Communist Party will refrain from keeping in touch with and even giving discreet assistance to Philippine Communists, whom after all the Chinese regard as spearheading a people's liberation movement (one might note that Radio Peking continues to make sporadic mention of guerrilla activities of the New People's Army). There are plenty of ways to achieve these ends—through Filipino-Chinese, through supporters in the US or elsewhere abroad, or through fishing craft putting ashore at unguarded coastline points.

Peking's policy is doubtless two-pronged, one objective being to maintain relations with a Communist movement that might be a useful ally at some future time of revolutionary opportunity, the other to strengthen Marcos' ties with China. Already China is supplying the Philippines with oil—not so much at present, but more is promised for the future—and engaging in a two-way trade valued at $72 million in 1975.[10] Peking's overriding concern appears to be to counter the Soviet Union. So Marcos will be cultivated to keep him from swinging toward Moscow and hopefully to keep him in alliance with the United States, to which the Chinese look as a bolster against the USSR. According to Marcos, Peking has let him know that it looks benignly on the retention of American bases in the Philippines. Whatever interest the CCP takes in Philippine Communists can therefore be expected to be subordinated to these national preoccupations in Peking, unless and until times seem more propitious than at present for a Communist attempt to take power.

## CPPL/ML and Revolutionary Struggle

As for the CPP/ML itself, its morale was no doubt hurt by Chinese recognition of the hated enemy, Marcos. But the CPP/ML leadership has managed to rationalize this development and maintain its revolutionary hopes.[11] The party still operates in accordance with the program and policy laid down in the directive adopted by its Central Committee in October 1972, a few weeks after Marcos declared martial law.[12] This document recognized the reverses caused by the Marcos crackdown but looked to the CPP/ML and its military arm, the NPA, to attract and organize workers, peasants, students, intellectuals, and "national" bourgeoisie antagonized by the Marcos dictatorship for an eventual drive to overthrow the regime. As noted above, the directive played down the class basis of this broad resistance movement and summoned "all those who are interested in achieving national freedom and democracy" to join with the Communist Party in a united front to carry on the struggle. A six-point program for a coalition of anti-Marcos forces centered on reestablishment of "democratic rights" (if only for "anti-fascist forces"); nullification of "unequal treaties" with the US; bringing Marcos and his "diehard accomplices" to trial; and strengthening the NPA to assume the tasks of organizing "bold" guerrilla resistance and local governing organs throughout the Philippines.

Subsequent literature emanating from the CPP/ML and the NPA has consistently echoed this directive. *Ang Bayan*, issued by the Manila underground, regularly emphasizes the Maoist-Chinese orientation of the CPP/ML, saying that the party is firmly founded on the theoretical basis of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Tse-tung Thought and denigrating the "modern revisionism purveyed by the Soviet socialist imperialists." The paper charges that "the US-Marcos fascist dictatorship" seeks "to retain and enlarge US imperialist and comprador-landlord interests" in the Philippines.

Party statements even before Peking's establishment of relations with the Marcos government rationalized such a step on the grounds that it would represent a "victory for the [PRC's] proletarian foreign policy" and the struggle against the Marcos regime, which the CPP/ML called a "puppet state of US imperialism." Peking-Manila relations would afford China an opportunity to counter the schemes of the US and the USSR in Asia and, by strengthening ties between the Chinese and Philippine peoples, would bring about a favorable climate for the revolutionary struggle in the Philippines."[13] The faithful are being

[10] Board of Investments, Manila.

[11] See van der Kroef, *loc. cit.*

[12] See fn. 2 above.

[13] See the CPP/ML statement of October 15, 1974, "The Diplomatic Victory of the People's Republic of China, the Victory of the Revolutionary Struggle in the Philippines," as broadcast clandestinely over the Voice of the Malayan Revolution in Mandarin to Malaysia and Singapore, April 17, 1975, Foreign Broadcast Information Service, *Daily Report: Asia and Pacific* (Washington, DC), April 30, 1975, pp. P 1-3. This statement was issued in the aftermath of Madame Marcos' visit to Peking in late September 1974.



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told, in effect, that Communist China will continue to work for the overthrow of President Marcos' government while outwardly maintaining friendly relations with it.

In line with these ideological prescriptions, the activities of the CPP/ML and the NPA have continued to emphasize building up a secret party membership and following of sympathizers and harassing government forces with guerrilla forays. The latter are usually designed to capture weapons or to highlight some grievances against the government among barrio dwellers in order to win their support. Commander Dante remains the military chieftain; Victor Corpus, a former lieutenant in the government forces who defected to the rebels some years ago, is in charge of training. President Marcos gives the strength of the NPA as 2,000 striking-force guerrillas, 5,000 combat support troops, and 50,000 loosely organized partisans.[14] The NPA itself claims an armed strength of 20,000 regulars, 100,000 combat support troops, and a "civilian mass base" of from 150,000 to 500,000.

*Two rangers of the Philippine armed forces look at the body of an NPA (New People's Army) cadre killed in a 1972 battle in Zambales Province.*

**—Wide World.**

Sison and others in the CPP/ML leadership are believed to operate underground, most of the time in Manila. After martial law was declared, the NPA deliberately dispersed its activities over most of the islands, making use of the "front" personnel that had had to go from open into clandestine activity after Marcos struck. The NPA base area appears to be still in the mountains of Isabela Province, but growing NPA activity on Mindanao and Sulu suggests a decision to step up actions in the south.[15] Communist efforts to infiltrate and collaborate with Moslem insurgents in the south have encountered resistance and had only limited success, but CPP/ML literature indicates that such infiltration remains a major objective. One difficulty in this regard is that championing the Moslem claims to territory in northwest Mindanao would mean in some cases denying these lands to Christian settlers and antagonizing Christians elsewhere in the Philippines who might otherwise be supporters of the Communists.

Testimony both to the continued activity of the NPA and to the success of Marcos' armed forces in countering the Communists was the capture of a number of top NPA leaders by government troops in early 1976.[16] In January, José Luneta, Satur Ocampo, Juanito Canlas, Osario Diego, and Antonio Zumel, all young men, were picked up in police raids in Manila and elsewhere on Luzon. Ocampo and Zumel are members of the CPP/ML Politiburo, Canlas is executive secretary of the Cagayan Valley Regional Operations Command, and Diego is party secretary for Nuevo Viscaya and Quirico Provinces. The others are reported to be members of the Central Committee with various current assignments. Ocampo was formerly a professor of political science at the University of the Philippines, Luneta a former president of the Business Writers' Association. In February, government forces seized seven members of the CPP/ML in northern Mindanao, including Nelia Sancho, a former University of the Philippines student who won the title of Queen of the Pacific in a 1971 beauty contest.

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[14] Ferdinand N. Marcos, *The Democratic Revolution in the Philippines*, Englewood-Cliffs, N.J., Prentice-Hall International, 1974.

[15] This apparent shift in NPA priorities was noted in a statement to the author by Philippines Defense Secretary Juan Ponce Enrile in August 1973.

[16] See, for example, the accounts in *The Times Journal* (Manila), Jan. 25 and Feb. 13, 1976.



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*Nelia Sancho, a former Philippine beauty queen, arrested in early 1976 for working on behalf of the NPA in northern Mindanao.*

—*Far Eastern Economic Review* (Hong Kong), Apr. 23, 1976, p. 11.

## The PKP on the Peaceful Path

Whereas the CPP/ML has continued on the path of violent revolution, the PKP has tried to build itself up as a legal Marxist party. So far Marcos had declined formally to legalize it (the same holds true for all other political parties, which he dissolved in 1972). In actuality, however, he allows PKP leaders and members, altogether numbering only a few hundred, to function without molestation.

PKP leaders Felicisimo Macapagal, Peregrino Taruc, and a number of other Politburo members lay low until late 1974, when they surfaced and publicly offered to cooperate with Marcos' New Society. Since then they have at times even attended occasions at Malacañang, the Philippine White House. The aged Luis Taruc, who no longer claims any formal Communist connections, has become an open apologist for the Marcos regime and toured the United States in this capacity two years ago.

The PKP is operating on the basis of a "Political Resolution" adopted in 1973 at the so-called Fifth Party Congress, believed to have been held in Manila.[17] The resolution looked to PKP-led revolutionary changes in the Philippines but abjured the CPP/ML concept of a "people's war" and armed revolution. A revolutionary change, it stated, results from an alteration of the "balance of class forces," which in turn requires optimum development of the struggle "against the exploiting classes." The resolution proclaimed PKP intentions to mobilize a national united front which would "wage every form of open and legal struggle, including electoral struggle." Nevertheless, the document did show some ambivalence toward violence. Observing that "the people's way to peaceful revolutionary transformation of our society" may be obstructed, the PKP affirmed the people's "rights" to employ force against those who use force themselves against the people. The PKP program, also adopted at the Fifth Congress,[18] follows that of the CPP/ML in calling for a united front of workers, intellectuals, peasants, and other revolutionary elements of society to achieve power via a democratic coalition—but not by the violent means that the CPP/ML advocates. In contrast to the latter's simplistic, doctrinaire depiction of Philippine society as still feudalistic and comprador-landlord-dominated, the PKP resolution takes into account current efforts at land reform and the growing agro-industrialization of the Philippines, the emergence of banker and managerial types, and resulting changes in class and social relationships. The PKP, like the CPP/ML, wants cooperation with the Moslems but goes further than the CPP/ML in advocating the Moslems' right—short of independence—to establish their own government with exclusive legislative, judicial, and executive powers. The resolution lacks any specific denunciation of Marcos and the New Society.

The PKP "soft" line toward Marcos coincided with the appearance in 1973 of a similar line in the Moscow press, which has been followed up by concrete actions. In 1974, the Soviet Union concluded a cultural agreement with the Philippines, and a trade mission opened up trade and shipping between the two countries.[19] Soviet cultural displays and visi-

[17] "Political Resolution Adopted by the Fifth Congress of the Partido Kommunista ng Pilipinas (PKP) on February 10, 1973," *Information Bulletin* (Toronto), Nos. 13-14, 1973, pp. 44-64.

[18] "Program Adopted by the Fifth Congress of the Partido Komunista ng Pilipinas (February 11, 1973)," *ibid.*, Nos. 17-18, 1973, pp. 16-30.

[19] See the report of Marcos' meeting with a 12-man mission of Philippine businessmen on September 13, 1974, before their departure to Moscow, in *The Times Journal*, Sept. 14, 1974. *Pravda* (Moscow) of Sept. 22, 1974, explicitly noted the economic and political significance of this mission. See *Current Digest of the Soviet Press* (Columbus, O.), Oct. 16, 1974, p. 14.



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*Madame Imelda Romualdez Marcos (left), wife of the President of the Republic of the Philippines, meets with Soviet Premier A.N. Kosygin (right) and USSR Minister of Culture Ye. A. Furtseva in Moscow in March 1972.*

**—TASS via Sovfoto.**

tors have begun to make periodic appearances in the Philippines. Two resident correspondents, one from TASS and one from *Pravda,* now function in Manila. President Marcos is scheduled to leave for the Soviet Union in late May for a visit which is expected to result in formal opening of diplomatic relations and signing of a Soviet-Philippine Treaty of Amity and Commerce. An exchange of embassies should follow shortly thereafter. The USSR has clearly entered upon a vigorous effort to establish a strong presence in the Philippines with the object of combating the influence of both the Chinese and the Americans there. Moscow will have need of and no doubt will make use of the new PKP. Espionage at American bases will be a major preoccupation of the Soviets, and clandestine PKP operatives can play a role there. Moreover, if the PKP develops into a significant social and political force, this could be an asset for Soviet maneuvers.

## Prospects

The tactics Marcos is using in dealing with his domestic Communists and their international connections are a combination of manipulation of the various Communist groups and their sponsors and concerted efforts at military suppression of the NPA. His toleration of the PKP permits this old-line party to siphon off into leftist but nonrevolutionary activities some radicals that might otherwise veer toward the militant CPP/ML. It also facilitates his playing the Russians off against the Chinese. Communists of whatever variety are no great threat to Marcos just at present. While the struggle against the CPP/ML is a drain on the government, Marcos is keeping the NPA contained by military operations and occasional amnesties that produce capitulations by some guerrillas. As for the PKP, for now it needs only watching.

The future may present a different picture. Already overpopulated with 45 million people, the Philippines has a population growth rate of more than three percent per annum. Economic gains are barely keeping pace with the addition of human bodies.[20] Wealth is concentrated in a small upper crust; below this, extreme poverty is widespread and growing. Land reform on rice and corn lands has forestalled rebelliousness in Central Luzon and some other areas, but there are still millions of landless rural dwellers,[21] all of whom are susceptible to the blandishments of Communist organizers. Low-paid white- and blue-collar workers in the cities and millions of urban and rural unemployed and underemployed countrywide are also a smoldering potential for trouble.[22]

A high rate of economic growth (an oil discovery off Palawan holds promise of a new source of domestic energy) could alleviate pressures for social and political change in the Philippines. If rapid growth is not achieved and a better distribution of the wealth does not occur, there could yet be a polarization that would give communism a new chance.

[20] US reports on the Philippines put economic growth there in 1974 and 1975 at roughly 5 percent per annum. See US Department of Commerce, *Foreign Economic Trends and Their Implications for the United States: Philippines,* FET-76-043, April 1976, p. 2.

[21] See fn. 6 above.

[22] See fn. 20.



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# "Disunited" Front in Norway

## By Per Egil Hegge

The last two years have been perhaps the most traumatic in the history of the Norwegian Communist Party (NKP), which like many other Western CP's has had no dearth of traumas—of bitter infighting, splits and expulsions—in the past. After a long and intense debate that has been remarkable for its frankness, the NKP has retreated from a course which would have led to its merger with three other groups in the fledgling Socialist Electoral Alliance (the *Sosialistisk Valgforbund,* hereafter SV), to the relinquishment of all its property to the new party thus formed, and to the closing down of its weekly organ, *Friheten* (Freedom). Had the NKP gone through with the merger as originally conceived, it would have been the first European Communist party (discounting the special case of the Icelandic CP) to plan and effect its own dissolution voluntarily.

While the NKP is a small and powerless party, with a support base that has not exceeded one to one-and-one-half percent of the Norwegian electorate in the last decade (when it could be measured),[1] its recent course deserves attention as an illustration of the larger debate that has been raging in the Communist movement concerning the extent to which parties can modify or abandon basic tenets of Marxism-Leninism without sacrificing their Communist "essence." The front-and-center stars in that debate during the past year have been the French and Italian CP's, which have championed startling departures from established dogma in their efforts to achieve accommodation with other political forces, and which have provoked rigorous responses in defense of the "faith" from the Soviet Communists and their supporters.[2] What makes the case of the little Norwegian party so interesting in this broader context is the fact that it went farther than any other party in the "accommodation" it contemplated—and then retreated headlong to a posture of staunch loyalty to Moscow and to consequent (albeit inadvertent) political isolation. It thus offers a study of point and counterpoint to the current trend toward "national" communism in the international Communist movement.

Since the history of the NKP was reviewed in some depth on these pages less than a year ago,[3] the present article will touch only briefly on the longer-range factors that have influenced the party's recent course. It seems sufficient to summarize the decade of leadership offered by the man who was the moving force in the Communist camp behind the plan to merge the NKP with the SV—the now-deposed NKP chairman, Reidar T. Larsen. A lifelong party member,

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[1] The NKP's share of the national vote has declined steadily from a postwar peak of 12 percent in 1945 to 6 percent in 1949, 5 percent in 1953, 3.4 percent in 1957, 3 percent in 1961, 1.4 percent in 1965, and 1 percent in 1969. In the 1973 election it participated in an SV alliance, so its direct proportion of the vote could not be measured. During 1975, monthly Gallup polls—which are published regularly in the major newspapers—showed a support base for the NKP of 1.0 to 1.5 percent of the electorate, a figure which has dipped to 0.2 percent in recent months (see further in text).

[2] *For a detailed study of the recent dramatic shifts in the posture* of the French Communist Party, see Ronald Tiersky, "French Communism in 1976," *Problems of Communism,* (Washington, DC), January-February 1976, pp. 20-47. For expositions of the Soviet posture, see Konstantin Zarodov, "Leninist Strategy and Tactics in Revolutionary Struggle," *Pravda* (Moscow), Aug. 6, 1975; and Vadim Zagladin, "World Changes and the Communist Movement," *Rabochiy klass i sovremennyy mir* (Moscow), September-October 1975.

[3] Trond Gilberg, "Patterns of Nordic Communism," *Problems of Communism,* May-June 1975, pp. 20-35.



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who in his 20's had headed the Communist youth movement and who for many years was news editor and then editor-in-chief of *Friheten,* Larsen was elevated to the top party post in 1965, at the age of 42. Under his helmsmanship, the NKP quickly joined the ranks of the revisionist parties asserting greater independence from Moscow. The party refused to take sides in the Sino-Soviet conflict, established close ties with the independent-minded Romanian CP, and developed "Romanian" tendencies of its own, overcoming—over time and through various tactics—the resistance of the pro-Moscow old guard. It also bitterly denounced the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia. (Of passing interest, Larsen himself has asserted that the inclinations of the party toward independence go much farther back than his assumption of the leadership, noting *inter alia* that in the aftermath of the Hungarian uprising of October 1956, the NKP declared in an official statement that "no people can have its problems solved by the entry of foreign troops" and that "every nation must decide its own future."[4])

## The Path toward Merger

Aside from his own convictions, two major factors apparently influenced Larsen's more recent political strategy. One was the continued inability of the party to attract more than a miniscule following on its own. The other was the victory of an unlikely coalition of forces—including Communists, some left-wing Socialists, a number of dissenters from the ruling Labor Party (DNA), and an agricultural bloc—in urging popular rejection of a proposal that Norway join the European Economic Community, a government-backed plan that was defeated by a resounding 55-percent vote in a nationwide referendum conducted in September 1972.

This sudden taste of success inspired the formation of the SV as a loose electoral alliance in the summer of 1973, prior to the parliamentary election in September. The four elements making up the SV were the Socialist People's Party (SF), the Communist Party, the Workers' Information Committee (AIK), and a group of Socialists without party affiliation, many of them old NKP members who had left or been expelled from the party during internecine struggles that took place around 1950.

[4] See interview of Larsen published in *Kontrast* (Oslo), No. 5, 1975 (an undated bimonthly).

The SF was a small party that had been in existence since 1961, when it was founded by a group of left-wing expellees from the Labor Party. It had managed to win two parliamentary seats in 1961 and again in 1965 but had been routed in the 1969 election. The anti-EEC campaign thus offered it a chance to stage a comeback. The AIK was a direct product of the Common Market issue: it had been formed as a committee in 1972 by DNA members who opposed the pro-EEC line of the party leadership. Some of its supporters waged the struggle against EEC without quitting Labor Party ranks, but several well-known members used AIK as a bridge to participation in the SV alliance.

The SV fared remarkably well in the election, winning 240,000 votes—or more than 11 percent of the total—and getting 16 of the 155 seats in the Norwegian parliament (*Storting*). This showing was made more significant by the fact that the Labor Party won only 35.5 percent of the total vote (less than it had gotten in any election since 1930), reducing its parliamentary representation to 62 seats and rendering the ensuing minority government dependent on SV support in the *Storting.*[5] It was obvious that the DNA was still paying the price of its pro-Common Market stance.

While the Communists got only one of the 16 SV seats—that won by the NKP chief himself[6]—the party was nevertheless "in from the cold," and Larsen now made his crucial decision to support the effort to turn the SV from an electoral alliance into a real party. His mood of the moment smacked of a certain "dizziness wtih success." As he commented in retrospect,

*I was convinced that the forces of the Socialist left wing could expect a breakthrough, and that they would gradually, and within a fairly short time, become larger than the Labor Party.*[7]

Although clearly the most forceful spokesman within the party leadership in favor of the merger plan, Larsen was not—at first—alone. In mid-January 1974, the NKP Central Committee discussed the plan and passed a resolution which declared:

[5] *Hvem Hva Hvor* (Who, What, Where), 1976, p. 64—a reference work published annually by the newspaper *Aftenposten* (Oslo).

[6] In the late spring of 1975, the Communists obtained a second seat in the *Storting,* as a result of the death of an SV representative from a constituency in central Norway. Under the Norwegian multi-member constituency system, a deputy member succeeds a member of parliament in case of death.

[7] Interview of Larsen in *Aftenposten,* Nov. 1, 1975.



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*It is our view that the clarifying ideological and political discussions now taking place inside the SV with a view to merger will give positive results. The discussion and the development of the organizations of SV will make it clear at what time such a merger can take place. Today, the Central Committee can see no serious difficulties that could block such a merger into one Marxist party.*[8]

Less than two years later, NKP deputy leader Martin Gunnar Knutsen—about to be appointed Larsen's successor as party chairman—was to state in a report to the 15th NKP Congress that "this resolution should not have been passed."[9]

## The Emergence of Opposition

In the interim, it became increasingly clear that there were in fact formidable obstacles in the way of the proposed merger, from the vantage point not only of the Communists but also of the Socialists in the alliance. The initiative for a merger had come from the old guard in the Socialist People's Party. But the Socialists were well aware that the inclusion of Communists in a new, single party raised crucial issues. The SF had, at its inception, offered itself as a "third alternative" to pro-Western or pro-Communist forces, since it favored a neutral Norway outside of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and was critical not only of the pro-NATO ruling Labor Party and of Washington but also of Moscow and the Warsaw Pact countries. To include the Communists in a political merger, and at the same time to continue a serious and credible critique of the brand of communism loyal to Moscow, posed extremely tough and—as it turned out—insoluble problems.

On the Communist side, the first signs of internal dissension concerned the time schedule of the proposed merger, an issue that began to surface in March and April 1974. The merger plan was to be

[8] Quoted in M. G. Knutsen's report to the 15th NKP Congress, published in *Friheten* (Oslo), Nov. 3-8, 1975.

[9] *Ibid.* Knutsen was to emerge as the leader of the "Moscow loyalists" in the debate over the SV merger.

*Reidar T. Larsen, then Chairman of the Norwegian Communist Party, addresses a press conference after a February 1975 party gathering. Other party figures, seated from left to right, are: Oddlag Andersen, Rolf Nettun, Martin Gunnar Knutsen (then Larsen's deputy and later his successor as NKP Chairman), and Marit Landsem Berntsen.*

—NTB



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developed in detail at an SV national conference scheduled for April (where it became clear that the proposed dissolution of the SF and the NKP was supposed to take place by December 1976). Preparing for that gathering, the Communist Party met on March 1-2 in a national conference of its own. Publicly, it affirmed its agreement to a merger and to the continued existence of the separate parties during an interim transition period. But it kept secret the contents of an "internal" party resolution concerning the specific timetable under consideration, while emphasizing for the record that the process of merger would have to take time.[10]

In early April, *Friheten* suddenly came out with a statement that the time schedule which the Socialist People's Party wanted to "impose" on the Communists was not acceptable and went on to comment: "It was not the belief that the parties would merge as soon as possible that gave us the victory" in the 1973 parliamentary election[11]—the first version of an argument later frequently aired by the opponents of merger that the victory was won *because* the SV was a loose alliance. Despite these early rumblings, the April SV conference met on schedule; agreed to start work on a "program of principles" for a new, merged party, to be adopted at a follow-up conference at Trondheim in March 1975; and forged detailed plans for the dissolution of the member parties by the end of 1976.

The suspicion that some members of the Socialist People's Party were pressing for a quick merger because they wanted to force the Communists to withdraw was now growing within the NKP. This suspicion was perhaps not entirely without foundation, to judge by criticisms aired by some of the Socialists (notably, the Parliamentary Leader of SV, Finn Gustavsen). More important, a new bone of contention now came to the fore: the question whether the new party should be "Marxist-Leninist" or merely "Marxist." This was not simply a question of agreeing on a descriptive label but of determining the new party's basic ideological perspective. A prolonged debate on the issue (more on which shortly) was launched on the pages of the respective SF and NKP organs, *Orientering* and *Friheten*. While the discussion may have been a rather esoteric one to most of the Norwegian electorate—which is not famous for its interest in political theology in any event—the question was of pivotal importance in the developing dissension within the SV alliance and within Communist ranks.

In ensuing months, other issues surfaced. An NKP Central Committee resolution of December 1974 suggested the scope of problems under discussion in declaring that "clear differences of opinion have been revealed in important areas. Among other questions, this involves the problems of Marxism-Leninism, the strategy for socialist development, and proletarian internationalism."[12] The resolution also stated that there could be no final determination regarding the dissolution of the NKP until the party itself decided that question at its 15th Congress, scheduled for the fall of 1975.

Still other issues arose with respect to the specific "program of principles" that was to be adopted for the new party at the Trondheim conference. When draft proposals were made public in February 1975, the Communists presented a minority view dissenting on no less than 26 points in the program—not counting those related to the unresolved issue of "Marxism-Leninism." (One of the more important of these points concerned the proposed SV stance on the Czechoslovak events of 1968, which had had an especially profound impact in Norway, owing to long-standing cultural ties among the Norwegian, Czech, and Slovak peoples. To make its "third alternative" line more credible, the SF wanted the Warsaw Pact intervention explicitly condemned in the SV program of principles. The Communists, who had deplored the intervention when it took place, nevertheless resisted the notion of a permanent "principle" on the subject—and won on this point.[13])

## The Solidification of Factions

Throughout this period, NKP Chairman Reidar Larsen attempted to play down the importance of the differences plaguing the SV and to win support within his own party for the proposed merger. It gradually became clear, however, that Larsen was being edged out of his position of influence in the NKP, even though he still retained the post of party leader. His new duties in parliament, where he had become a member of the Committee for Industry, had taxed him with a heavy workload, giving him less time for intraparty tactical maneuvering. By the end of 1974

[10] *Ibid.*

[11] *Friheten*, April 8-13, 1974.

[12] Quoted from Knutsen's report to the 15th NKP Congress, *supra*.

[13] However, a separate declaration condemning the intervention was passed at the Trondheim conference in March 1975. The Communist delegates abstained from the vote.



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and certainly by the time of the Trondheim conference, it was quite apparent that his views were not shared by a significant element in the party leadership, and that the latter had acquired controlling influence in the party apparatus and the NKP organ, *Friheten.* The prime force in this group was Larsen's nominal deputy, the aforementioned M.G. Knutsen.

In the important debate over Marxism-Leninism, Larsen's posture was in fact much closer to that of his left-wing Socialist colleagues than to that of his Communist rivals. The Socialist People's Party's stance—reaffirmed at an SF congress held in late January 1975—emphasized that the new party should be a "Marxist revolutionary party."[14] Knutsen and his followers took this to mean that the SF "clearly rejected Marxism-Leninism."[15] Larsen's position—as spelled out in one of his contributions to the debate at Trondheim—was that too much had been written and spoken about "Leninism" over the months preceding the conference and that this discussion had concentrated exclusively on the term as the theory of an elitist party. Leninism is many things, he said, and he stressed the continuing validity of Lenin's analysis of imperialism. "But comrades, if, in establishing a new party in Norway in the 1970's, we were to apply his elitist principles of party organization, I am convinced that we could do nothing more stupid. . . ."[16] The unpopularity of Larsen's views inside the NKP was underscored by the fact that *Friheten,* in its report on the congress, deleted this particular paragraph. It could be assumed that a Communist Party leader who was censored on an important theoretical point in the party's main organ was in trouble.

Despite the obvious dissidence in the ranks of the attending Communists, the Trondheim conference—which convened March 14-15, 1975—went through the motions of accomplishing what it was supposed to. It declared the formation of the new party, retaining its abbreviation, SV, but changing its name to *Sosialistisk Venstreparti* (Socialist Left Party). It simulated agreement on a "program of principles" for the party. It passed a resolution reaffirming that the four groups inside SV would dissolve their organizations, transfer their property, and cease publication of their party organs by the end of December 1976. Finally, it elected a compromise candidate as leader of the new party—Berit Aas. A former lecturer in sociology at the University of Oslo, Ms. Aas had been a Labor Party member until she joined AIK and was catapulted into prominence by winning a parliamentary seat in the 1973 election. Her first formal statement upon assuming chairmanship of the new party bears out her earlier confession[17] to a certain degree of naivete: "I expect the Communist Party of Norway to decide on its own dissolution at its Party Congress in the autumn."[18] But this and other optimistic statements about the future of the new party could not conceal the profound discord that underlay the façade of unity. There was something unreal about the closing of the conference, on a dark winter night, with a "procession of light" through the streets of the ancient Norwegian capital; at the least, it was a remarkable demonstration of *"Zweck-Optimismus"* ("goal-optimism").

The next day, M.G. Knutsen conducted an im-

*Pictured at the March 1975 Trondheim meeting where the Socialist Electoral Alliance* (Sosialistisk Valgforbund) *became the Socialist Left Party* (Sosialistisk Venstreparti) *are, from the left: Communist leader Reidar T. Larsen; Ove Larsen; Berit Aas, Chairman of the new SV; and Finn Gustavsen, head of the SV's parliamentary group.*

—NTB.

[14] *Orientering* (Oslo), Feb. 6-13, 1975.
[15] Quoted from Knutsen's report to the 15th NKP Congress, *supra.*
[16] Quoted in *Orientering,* March 20-26, 1975.
[17] "I am terribly naive," she stated in an interview published in *Morgenbladet* (Oslo), July 18, 1973.
[18] *Aftenposten,* March 17, 1975.



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promptu press interview in which he stated flatly that the conference resolution on merger "means absolutely nothing to us." It was not the SV but the Communists themselves who would decide on dissolution. He acknowledged that a new organization had been founded but said that "in practice, it is something halfway between a party and an alliance." He stated that "this halfway stage can go on as long as necessary," adding, however, that "in the daily political struggle, the parties inside SV [will] stand together."[19] Commenting on Knutsen's remarks, Larsen retorted that the deputy leader was speaking for himself.[20]

## Mounting Ferment

The debate inside the Communist Party now accelerated, and it soon became evident that a well-orchestrated campaign was being conducted by the opponents of merger and supporters of Knutsen. Predominantly in the pages of the party weekly, *Friheten*, but also through statements and interviews in other public forums, the staunch "Marxist-Leninists" and Moscow loyalists made it clear that they could not accept the terms or the time schedule of the merger plan as adopted at Trondheim. While the critics of merger dominated the debate, supporters of Larsen and the SV were accorded sufficient space in the party organ to present their point of view. But increasingly, in the months leading up to the November NKP Congress, it became evident that they were in a minority and that Knutsen's backers had commanding influence with the rank and file.

To some degree, the eventual victory of the Knutsen faction would be due to the subtle intervention of Moscow, which had an obvious stake in the outcome of the struggle, despite the insignificance of the Communist following in Norway. The first sign of Soviet interest at this stage of the debate was the publication in *Pravda,* about a week after the Trondheim conference, of a TASS report that reviewed the development of the Socialist Electoral Alliance and added the following comment:

*The SV conference has shown serious ideological and political differences of view among those parties and groupings constituting it. Having decided to establish a Socialist Left Party, the SV conference at the same time refused to include in the party program some most important, fundamental principles of Marxism-Leninism, as proposed by the delegates of the Communist Party. . . . The new party, which has been created with the aim of organizational unity of the forces of the left in the Norwegian labor movement, is therefore not at all an alternative to a Marxist-Leninist party. The continuation of the activity of the Communist Party of Norway on the basis of [its established] program . . . preserves its . . . significance from the point of view of the fundamental interests of the Norwegian working class [and] the struggle for peace, democracy and social progress.*[21]

Under the leadership of Knutsen, a delegation of the NKP visited the Soviet Union toward the end of June. A communiqué issued at the close of the visit and published in *Pravda* stated that the Norwegian guests had emphasized to their Soviet hosts, Central Committee Secretaries Mikhail Suslov and Boris Ponomarëv, that "the NKP would . . . in the future be conducting its activity firmly on a Marxist-Leninist basis."[22] Back home in Norway, Knutsen told a television audience that he and his delegation had received no "instructions" from Moscow concerning the internal situation in the party, but he did refer to "talks" that had taken place. He expressed "regret" that Reidar Larsen had not been able to take part in the visit and the talks, implying that the NKP leader's busy schedule had kept him from attending (though it was not really clear how much choice Larsen had had in the matter).[23]

Meantime, the campaign conducted by Knutsen's supporters was causing obvious distress to those who still hoped for a successful merger, including even the most committed optimists. In a public address late in May, SV leader Berit Aas displayed her feelings in an outburst of metaphors, declaring that the situation inside SV was an "eldorado for provocateurs," and adding:

*This has not been a bed of roses. Nor did I expect a rose garden out of Trondheim. But on the other hand, neither did I expect that we would create such big problems for ourselves, comparable to the problems our adversaries are creating [for us] . . .* [24]

Some three weeks later, the SV Central Committee

[19] Quoted in *ibid.*
[20] *Ibid.*
[21] *Pravda,* March 25, 1975.
[22] *Ibid.,* July 2, 1975.
[23] Interview televised by the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation, July 2, 1975.
[24] *Aftenposten,* May 29, 1975.



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passed a resolution that strongly criticized those who wanted to revise the time schedule for the merger. The six Communist members of the Central Committee split their vote—with three voting for and three against the resolution. The wording was tough, even considering the tenor of the debate going on:

*Lately, statements by leading officials and local bodies in the NKP have expressed direct disagreement concerning the completion of the merger process in SV. Also, the view has been expressed that the NKP must continue to exist as a party after the end of 1976, regardless of the decision taken by SV. This has created doubts about the April decisions [of the 1974 SV conference] and about whether they will be effective, a fact which is highly injurious to the interests of SV. The Central Committee of SV accordingly deems it necessary that the NKP Congress in October confirm that it still stands by the April decisions.*[25]

Probably the most eloquent attack on the position of the "Knutsenites" was made by Larsen himself, in a statement published in *Friheten* in late June. In an angry reaction against an article which had claimed that those who favored SV misunderstood, or ignored, the difference between unity and organizational merger, Larsen wrote:

*The article, "What is Unity?," is only one of many indications lately inside our party of a desire to push through a total change in the party line.* Friheten *and several public statements and interviews by members and officials of the party have been completely dominated by views which can only damage the development of SV and of the NKP itself. It looks as if those who keep this campaign going have completely lost the power to see the unique possibility which SV has offered the Socialist left-wing forces, as well as the catastrophic setback which will result if SV is to be destroyed. I ask you, all those of you who are responsible for this campaign, whether you have considered the full implications of the sectarian course you want to impose on the NKP. Can anyone believe that it is possible to show a steadily increasing enmity toward those with whom we have joined in the SV and at the same time keep the possibility of cooperation as an alternative? Does anyone believe that the unity line of the NKP can be developed by posing ultimatums to our partners? Would we have accepted such methods? Before this rages on into a situation where the NKP ends up in hopeless isolation, thanks to its own actions, it might be worth the trouble to think a little.*[26]

## New Disappointments and Setbacks

By the summer months, another problem arose. The preparation for local elections, to be held throughout Norway in September, was under way. Inside the SV, the Communists now complained that they were being cheated in the nominations—that the NKP was not getting enough candidates in proportion to its strength in and contribution to the SV. The nomination in the capital, Oslo, was especially tricky; there, the Communists ordered all their candidates off the ballot on the ground that the editor-in-chief of *Friheten,* Arne Jörgensen, had received a less prominent place on the list than he deserved.

Because of the debate that raged within the SV throughout the electoral campaign, it hardly had time or opportunity to explain to the voters what the different factions of the party alliance had agreed upon. Several internal squabbles of a personal nature contributed to the general impression conveyed by the SV of "a house divided." As a consequence, the SV lost more than half of the votes it had attracted a

*The Socialist Left Party (SV) hands out campaign literature during the September 1975 Norwegian local elections.*

—NTB.

[25] *Ibid.*, June 16, 1975.
[26] *Friheten*, June 23-28, 1975.



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mere two years earlier, polling 103,010, or 5.6 percent of the total, in the election.[27] For the Communists, things were even worse. In local elections in Norway, the voters have the right to delete the names of candidates from the proposed slates, and in many cases, Communists who had been prominent in their local municipal bodies for some 20 to 30 years were blackballed by SV voters. The Communists of the Knutsen faction took this as clear proof that the other groups in SV did not really want Communist partners, and the election—which took place about six weeks prior to the 15th NKP Congress—greatly strengthened the hand of those critical of the merger. *Friheten* said in its comment on the results of the election:

*The 240,000 [Norwegians] who voted SV in 1973 did not give their vote to any one party, but to an alliance of left-wing forces. That is exactly what the Socialist Electoral Alliance was. . . . If the line of the NKP [Moscow loyalists] had been followed—the one that aimed at preserving the integrity of the SV parties and at developing the Electoral Alliance into a broad, collective mass movement, then the 15th of September, 1975 [the election date], could have given the left-wing forces in Norway a new, great victory. . . .*

At the same time, *Friheten* attempted to pin the blame for the ferment in SV on those pushing for merger, portraying the NKP loyalists as people seeking cooperation on realistic goals:

*SV must abandon its collision course and build on the basis of everything on which the parties agree. We must get away from the tearing and splitting debates on our differences and start discussions on solving the concrete political tasks which await us.*[28]

In the meantime, *Friheten* had been directly involved in still another development contributing to the divisive atmosphere within the SV. As mentioned earlier, it was part of the merger plan that both *Friheten* and its SF counterpart, *Orientering*, should cease publication upon the formation of the SV as a party; the two papers were supposed to be merged into a single new publication called *Ny Tid* (New Times). Over considerable internal opposition, the Socialist People's Party lived up to its end of the bargain, closing down the party organ in August 1975. The opposition to this move was led by the old guard of the SF, centered around the aforementioned Parliamentary Leader of the SV, Finn Gustavsen, who had been one of the founders of *Orientering*. The argument advanced against closure was that it was wrong to shut down an established paper with an established name and tradition (and indeed, *Orientering* had won much grudging praise from non-Socialists and Labor Party members for its journalistic professionalism) at a time when it was becoming increasingly clear that the Communists were not going to cease publication of *Friheten*, regardless of what the SV conferences had decided. Nevertheless, the move was made, and the new paper *Ny Tid* began publication with an almost totally new staff. From the first issue, a decline from the journalistic standards of its predecessor was evident, and—unofficially, at least—left-wing Socialists did not attempt to hide their disappointment over the new organ (though no figures have been published, the paper is said to be running a severe deficit that is bleeding the resources of the SV).

## The NKP's New Isolation

Against all of this background, the proceedings of the 15th NKP Congress, which convened October 31, probably should have been a foregone conclusion. Very simply, the Communists confirmed their refusal to abide by the time schedule for dissolution and merger and reiterated their demand for a Marxist-Leninist party. With apparent ease, Reidar T. Larsen was deposed as party chairman and replaced by his former deputy, M. G. Knutsen. The change of leadership was signaled by the fact that Knutsen delivered the main report to the Congress, and Larsen was not even allowed to speak during the part of the proceedings open to the press.

In this report, Knutsen firmly reiterated the stance of the Moscow loyalists on the importance of continued allegiance to Marxism-Leninism as a *conditio sine qua non* of merger:

*Before the NKP could be dissolved and replaced by the SV party, clear conditions would have to be fulfilled: The new party would have to be based on Marxism-Leninism. We would have to have a common view on tactics and strategy, and advocate a march toward socialism in stages. The party would have to work for a broad unity movement in the working*

[27] *Hvem Hva Hvor*, 1976, p. 64.
[28] *Friheten*, Sept. 15-20, 1975.



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*Martin Gunnar Knutsen (center) pictured at the November 1975 15th Congress of the Norwegian Communist Party, where he was elected Party Chairman. To his right is Odd B. Hansen, and to his left,* Friheten *editor Arne Jörgensen.*

—NTB.

*class and a merger of the democratic forces of the people, and [it would have] to be at the head of the struggle against the monopolies. It would have to be based on proletarian internationalism.*

Still on the problem of dissolution, he added:

*In periods of weakness it may be tempting to give up the party and settle for a broader and looser organization with others. This might give a Communist more room to try his wings and a broader field of work. But this type of "unity" is simply a desperate and hazardous attempt to ride an opportunistic wave toward an unknown shore, and it must be rejected. This type of unity implies that we disregard a fundamental principle: the fact that in the class struggle in each and every country, a Marxist-Leninist party is necessary.*[29]

Larsen's bitter reaction to his defeat at the 15th Congress was summed up in a charge that it was his adversaries—and not he and his supporters—who were "lying [down] and not standing on the basis of Marxism-Leninism":

*They have repeatedly proved that they themselves have never known anything but the letter of Marxism and have never understood its spirit.*[30]

In the interim since the 15th Congress, the NKP under its new leader has continued to claim that it is working and still wants to work with the other groups in the SV in a loose alliance. It has also embellished its conciliatory tone, stretching out a hand to those with whom the loyalists disagreed on the merger question. In looking for allies—on the party's own terms—Knutsen has commented that "we ask no questions as to what people have done [in the past] but what they will do in the future."[31]

The remaining partners in SV have made it clear, however, that they view the outcome of the 15th NKP Congress as a decisive barrier against further cooperation with the Communists. At a conference held in late February 1976, the SV reaffirmed its previous decision that dual membership—that is membership in the SV and any other party—was unacceptable and set May 1 as the enforcement date for this ruling. In other actions, the conference elected a new party chairman, Berge Furre (a member of parliament and a specialist on Norwegian history), and—in a gesture that seemed both compassionate and practical—chose the deposed NKP

*New leaders of the SV elected in February 1976: from the left, Steinar Stjernö; Berge Furre, the new SV Chairman; Berit Aas, former SV Chairman; Reidar T. Larsen, new SV Parliamentary Leader; and Rune Fredh, SV secretary.*

—NTB.

[29] *Ibid.*, Nov. 3-8, 1975.

[30] *Ny Tid* (Oslo), Nov. 7, 1975. The word for "lying" in Norwegian has only one meaning, rendered by the English "lying down"; it has nothing to do with the telling of untruths.

[31] Interview in *Friheten*, Jan. 5-10, 1976. In the same interview, Knutsen reiterated a claim he had made on several occasions, to the effect that the NKP remains an independent party. That he intends to maintain close contact with the Soviet camp seems quite clear, however; one of his first acts as party leader was to visit Prague for "open and comradely" talks with the Czechoslovak Party leader and President, Gustav Husak (see *ibid.*).



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leader Larsen as Parliamentary Leader of the SV. Shortly afterward, Larsen and two other prominent Communists (Aud Gustad, a member of parliament,[32] and Rune Fredh, a former NKP Secretary) resigned from the NKP. Some of the Communist rank and file followed suit, though exactly how many has not been disclosed.

Today, the Norwegian Communists are finding themselves out in the cold once more, charged with isolationism and sectarianism. This situation is clearly realized in the party, though the appeals for cooperation go on. There is a sense of anxiety in Communist ranks, apparent—for example—in a statement made by the leader of the Communist youth movement, George M. S. Ovesen, early this year:

*There can be no reason to conceal the fact that the Communist Party of Norway as well as the rest of the organized Socialist Left faces serious problems, problems that must be discussed openly and earnestly in as many sections of the Norwegian labor movement as possible. . . . One of the main tasks of the work of the NKP in the nearest future will be . . . to contribute actively toward recreating and developing the organized cooperation of the Left on a durable basis.*[33]

For the moment, the call for "organized cooperation" sounds like a whistle in the dark. By following the course of ideological purism—by choosing to be "right and small" rather than "wrong and strong" (to cite the line of the Zarodovs and Zagladins[34])—the Norwegian Communists appear to have cut themselves off from the only allies they had.

In the process, they have also further reduced their minute following. Recent Gallup poll results showed the NKP trailing all other parties with the support of a mere 0.2 percent of the population. "We laugh at a figure like that," is what party leader Knutsen had to say in February.[35] By late April he stopped laughing and charged the Norwegian Gallup Institute with cheating, a charge for which he could have been sued. But the Institute chose simply to open its files to the Norwegian News Agency, which reported that it found no irregularity in the way the polling had been conducted. There is an established legal tradition in Norway that statements which normally would qualify as libel are not considered such if made by persons considered to lack "libeling power" (*injurierende kraft*). For a party leader to be counted among that group would seem to be the ultimate insult.

[32] Gustad had succeeded a deceased SV deputy in the *Storting*. See footnote 6.

[33] *Friheten*, Jan. 5-10, 1976.

[34] See footnote 2.

[35] Quoted in *Verdens Gang* (Oslo), Feb. 11, 1976. As noted in footnote 1, Gallup political polls are published monthly in Norway.



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# Books

# The French CP's Many Faces

**By Roy C. Macridis**

RONALD TIERSKY: *French Communism, 1920-1972.* New York, Columbia University Press, 1974.
GEORGES MARCHAIS: *Le Défi démocratique* (The Democratic Challenge). Paris, Grasset, 1973.
GEORGES MARCHAIS: *Le Parti Communiste propose (XXIe Congrés-Rapport de Georges Marchais)* (The Communist Party Proposes [The 21st Congress Report of Georges Marchais]). Paris, The French Communist Party, November 1974.
GEORGES MARCHAIS: *La Politique du Parti Communiste Français* (The Policy of the French Communist Party). Paris, Editions Sociales, 1974.

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FOR ALL THOSE who follow the twists and turns of European communism, recent developments in the doctrine and tactics of the French Communist Party (PCF) provide an added source of bewilderment. Is it a party like all other parties? Is it for revolution or reform? Does it still consider class struggle the womb from which the working class will spring to life and gain power? Will it shed democratic centralism in favor of internal pluralism; and—even more important—if it ever comes to power as a part of a left-wing governmental coalition will it allow for a plurality of parties and for opposition parties?

Professor Tiersky's excellent and objective analysis is the best available background material. It also makes clear the difficulty of answering the questions we have raised. His concluding remarks are the best introduction to this essay:

*The French Communists will surely continue to change, but in a still completely unstructured direction whose end-point remains itself delicately vulnerable to the will of men and the accidents of history. . . .* (p. 404)

The possible parameters of change, as outlined by Tiersky, not only indicate the remarkable flexibility of the party's strategy and tactics but help us account for some of its more recent twists and turns. Tiersky identifies four major "faces" of French communism. The party is the revolutionary "vanguard"—the self-proclaimed repository of Marxist theory and revolutionary action. It is also a "countercommunity" with its own values, schools, press, and lifestyles, demanding and securing the full allegiance of its members. (Tiersky, however, does not tell us how we can reconcile this with the relatively high rate of turnover in party membership). The party is, third, a "people's tribune"—the champion of the little man, of the underprivileged, the frustrated, and the protesters. Finally, it is a "government party," both at the municipal level and occasionally—as in 1944-47—as a full-fledged member of a government coalition. Somehow permeating and perhaps controlling these profiles of French communism is the international vocation. The PCF is committed to the cause of international communism, which is led by the Soviet Union. This does *not* mean—and the author is absolutely right to stress it—that the Soviet Union issues directives that the party follows. Nor does it exclude occasional disagreements between the PCF and the Soviet leadership. (Indeed, there have been some such disagreements, although these, in the reviewer's opinion, are not as important as Professor Tiersky seems to think.) What it does mean is that when the Soviet leadership commits itself unequivocally to a course of action in the international arena, a complex set of psychological, ideological, political, and cognitive mechanisms, as well as bureaucratic constraints, is set in motion and re-



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sults in the alignment of the course of the PCF with that of the Soviet Union.

According to Tiersky, emphasis on the vanguard and countercommunity roles corresponds to the "hard line" of the PCF; emphasis on the "tribune" role and "governmental vocation," to the "soft line." It is between the "soft" and the "hard" line, between what Lenin called "the ebb" and "the flow," that the PCF has moved ever since the Congress of Tours in 1920. Which way has it been going in the last decade?

There is no doubt whatsoever—and Tiersky's careful documentation will dissipate all doubts—that the party has been moving out of its political ghetto (another word for countercommunity) and adopting a progressively softer line compatible with the political values and institutions of the Republic—even (subject to some qualifications) with the Gaullist Republic and some Gaullist policies. Communists and Gaullists, many Communist leaders proclaimed during the presidential election of May 1974, had been together on all the critical issues facing the country—the Resistance and the Liberation, the rejection of the European Defense Community, Algerian independence, extrication from NATO, and affirmation of national independence!

WHAT ARE the precise manifestations of the "soft line"? The following list reflects in great part the Tiersky analysis, with illustrations added from the three books by PCF Secretary General Marchais.

(1) *The French road to socialism.* Since 1956 (and even earlier), the leaders of the PCF—Maurice Thorez, Waldeck Rochet, and, more recently, Georges Marchais—have stressed that there is a French road to socialism, if only to placate their critics and to show a certain degree of independence vis-à-vis Moscow. However, the Communists' emphasis on the point has increased substantially in the last few years. Their elaboration of the Common Program of the Left of June 27, 1972, their programmatic pledge for an "advanced democracy," their constant reminders that the complexity and richness of French society preclude servile imitation of any foreign experience, even the Soviet one, are to the point. Marchais, for example, has stated:

*Our path to socialism is a democratic path. It is not the path of renunciation but of confidence in the likelihood that the people's struggle will triumph. It is not the path of narrow electioneerism but the struggle of the workers and of the masses in order to make sure that the will of the people expressed through universal suffrage will prevail. (Le Parti Communiste propose,* p. 39)

(2) *The peaceful conquest of power.* Beginning in the 1960's, the party leaders began to play down the inevitability of class struggle and the need for a proletarian revolution and to emphasize instead the prospects of gaining political power peacefully, in cooperation with other parties and groups, notably the Socialists, by receiving a popular electoral mandate. A victory for the alliance supporting the Common Program of the Left in the parliamentary elections of 1973 or even (with some qualifications) a victory by its candidate in the presidential election of 1974 would have given them such a mandate.

(3) *The preservation of democratic liberties.* The Communists have asserted their intention to fully respect the basic civil and religious liberties of the French—freedom of speech, press, and association. Indeed, Marchais now articulates a definition of freedom

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that might have come straight from John Stuart Mill:

*Freedom is the possibility given to every man to realize himself fully, to organize his life according to his tastes, to fully allow his talents, his creativity and his personality to blossom in a society based on fraternal relations and mutual trust. . . . (La Politique du Parti Communiste Français,* p. 48)

(4) *Plurality of political parties.* The PCF has asserted repeatedly that a plurality of parties is indispensable in a democratic and socialist republic, and it has promised not to tamper with this feature of French life. Marchais could not be more categorical:

*We repeat that in a socialist France of tomorrow the political parties will be free, including the parties of the opposition. We are not afraid to guarantee to them the right to use all legal means available to regain the majority because we are convinced the policies of the Left will cause them to lose popular support. (La Politique du Parti Communiste Français,* p. 67)

(5) *The dictatorship of the proletariat.* In light of (2), (3), and (4) above, the Communists maintain that there is no question of dictatorship involved in the French road to socialism, no intimation that the ruling class and the state might be "smashed to pieces." Nor is there a question of the imposition of such a dictatorship by the working class—or, rather, by the Communist leadership acting on behalf of the working class.

(6) *The principle of "alternance."* In the face of an adverse popular vote, Marchais has stated (with some qualifications), a left-wing majority would relinquish governmental power in favor of the opposition.

ALL THESE doctrinal pronouncements would tend to suggest that the PCF has accepted the fundamental norms and institutions and practices of a democratic polity. One might therefore be inclined to conclude that the "soft line" has swallowed up the "hard" one, and that the PCF star will henceforth shine benignly in the French political firmament with its new "soft" approach.

It would be foolhardy, however, to draw such a conclusion. First, Tiersky himself, while outlining the changes in doctrine, never for a moment attributes an element of irreversibility to them. Secondly, a number of caveats in Marchais' statements, as well as recent events, indicate that under the soft mask there still lurks the iron heel of party domination, despotism, and orthodoxy that brooks little compromise and tolerance. Let us look first at Marchais' caveats.

(1) The First Secretary of the PCF writes: "During the 20th Party Congress [1972] we stressed that we had entered on a period when the class struggle had sharpened and widened" (*Le Parti Communiste propose,* p. 7). Significantly, he later adds:

*The only class that is able to provide the basis of a union against big capitalism is the working class. It remains the essential force of the revolutionary struggle.* (p. 73)

Since, as we shall see presently, the party is the vanguard of the working class, the conclusion is obvious. If this class struggle cannot be waged and won in terms of the soft policy—which is another way of saying, if the monopolies and the ruling classes resist—then a dictatorship will be "objectively" necessary.

(2) In granting the importance of preserving a plurality of parties in France, Marchais does not use the Scandinavian countries or other Western democracies as a referent. His model is the East European countries—where, he contends, a plurality flourishes! (*Le Défi démocratique,* pp. 127-28)

(3) Regarding the principle of "alternance"—which Tiersky, rightly, considers to be the most significant doctrinal concession—there are more political boobytraps than there are minefields in the Sinai Desert. First, the opposition and oppositional groups will have to operate in terms of the *"new legal order"* established by a government of the Left. "What do you mean by the free activity of all political parties *within the framework* of legality?" Marchais asks rhetorically. He answers the question thus:

*We mean something very simple. In the society that we want to build, the corruption of money and violence will not be tolerated. The parties ought to publish their accounts; similarly, various groups and movements that might resort to violence or that advocate violence* (i.e., *the fascist groups) will be outlawed. . . . Perhaps this could be accomplished by using the legislation passed in 1936. (Le Défi démocratique,* p. 130)

This is simple enough, but it is not all. At what point can the opposition parties be considered to have won a majority against a government of the Left and hence to be entitled to return to power? The PCF has rejected the existing



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electoral system. Its commitment to allow the opposition to assume power and form a government is conditional upon the introduction of a system of proportional representation, which figures as one of the pledges of the Common Program of the Left. But under such a system, it is not likely that the opposition would be able to win a clear-cut electoral victory that would give it a majority in the National Assembly.

What, then, would constitute a "majority"? Conceivably, it might be defined as a majority of the votes cast in the National Assembly (produced, e.g., by defection of some elements of the Left alliance). But could a government of the Left be overthrown by such a vote? Technically, such a development would be impossible, for according to the rule laid out in the Common Program, once the Left coalition wins a majority in the National Assembly on the basis of the Common Program, its members are committed to form a government and to support such a government. In short, they have entered into a contract *(contrat de législature).* A defection is not contemplated, and if it were to occur, then dissolution of the National Assembly must follow *automatically.*

And what is to be the role of the President of the Republic? Again Marchais is quite illuminating:

*The Common Program of the Left advocates the limitation of presidential prerogatives. . . . The government must determine and implement the policies that are laid out in terms of the contract that binds the Prime Minister to the National Assembly. (La Politique du Parti Communiste Français,* p. 61)

Hence, it appears that the President would not be able to exercise his personal powers, including those of dissolution, of calling for a referendum, or of using the emergency powers laid down in article 16 of the Constitution.

THESE ARE interesting but perhaps only marginal caveats. The real doctrinal threat lies in the twin formula, which the PCF has not repudiated, of the "objective majority" and the Communist Party's "vanguard" role. It is absolutely essential to keep in mind the special character of the party as a vanguard when one assesses how the French Communists are likely to treat their allies. From the PCF perspectives, these allies are only supporting forces, the links that unite the party with the masses that it itself has failed to mobilize and to induct. While the PCF regards the tacit support, benevolent neutrality, or even the apathy of the masses as indispensable to the achievement of its ends, it has steadfastly maintained that leadership of the masses belongs to the Communists. Marchais has put the matter this way:

*The workers, all the democrats, must have at their disposal a fighting party, determined,* clairvoyant *and effective. This party is the Communist Party. It can and does play the role of vanguard of the working class and of the people because it is the party of the class that is the most interested in the transformation of the society, the working class; because it bases its action on a revolutionary theory that is constantly enriched with new conclusions drawn from experience; because it has rules of organization that assure its unity of action. . . . (Le Parti Communiste propose,* p. 84)

This leadership claim, it should be noted, does not derive from a numerical superiority of the Communists over the other parties of the Left, though the PCF has frequently stressed the importance of its share of the popular vote in recent elections. In Communist eyes, electoral strength and votes do not constitute a substitute for the vanguard position of the party. "Narrow electioneerism" is not accepted. The party, irrespective of of its voting strength, is inherently *the* party of the Left—indeed, not only the first, but also the *only* party of the Left. Beyond and above the vagaries of the votes cast for or against political parties, there is an overriding political truth, an overriding political destiny for the world. It is the establishment of socialism under the leadership of the Communist Party. If the people reject this destiny at the polls, it is simply because they have been "brainwashed," "socialized into the system," "intimidated," or just plain "alienated." Quite recently, the French Communist Party has underscored this notion, though cautiously and in a negative way. Everybody who criticizes the Communist Party (whether that of France or that of Portugal) is "objectively" on the side of reaction and the monopolies. "Anti-communism," a charge leveled at all the critics of the party, has become synonymous with treason to the cause of the Left. It takes just one more step to assert—as Alvaro Cunhal, head of the Portuguese Communist Party did[1]—that in the last analysis votes do not count when they are cast against those

[1] Interview with Oriana Fallaci, published originally in *L'Europeo* (Milan) and reprinted in *Paris-Match* (Paris) for the week of June 22, 1975.



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who "objectively" are on the side of truth and freedom.

THE PERIOD since October 1974 has provided the greatest test of the PCF's "soft line," and it has afforded some evidence of an apparent hardening of the PCF's outlook. This has involved relations between the French Communists and Socialists and the interpretation of events in Portugal.

With respect to Communist-Socialist relations, it should be noted that legislative by-elections in September-October 1974 showed the Communists trailing the Socialists; even more ominous from the PCF viewpoint, a good part of the Socialist electorate did not vote for a Communist candidate on the second ballot, while the Communists remained loyal to party orders and voted for a Socialist. The PCF might have tolerated this had it not been for statements made by François Mitterrand and other Socialist leaders, as well as the unmistakable revival of the Socialist Party as an organization and as a vote-getter. For example, Mitterrand spoke of "balancing" the forces of the Left by increasing the strength of the Socialists to equal that of the Communists,[2] and he presided over a large, umbrella meeting (*les Assises du socialisme*) attended by the Socialist Party, the splinter PSU (*Parti Socialiste Unifié*), the Democratic Federation of Labor, and other groups and associations, including the Left-wing Radicals. Many of these groups and their leaders were pivotal from the Communist standpoint, since they constantly wavered between the Socialists and the Communists. If the Socialists were to succeed in uniting them in a fairly well-organized bloc under Socialist aegis, then the chances for the Communists to attract them or to create confusion within the Socialist ranks would decrease. Of equal concern to the Communists, the resolution of the *Assises* contained not a word about the Common Program.[3]

Mitterrand was able, too, to rid the leadership of the Socialist Party of some of its most left-wing elements. While these elements were not close to the Communists, they could nonetheless have been counted upon to have made Mitterrand's life difficult had they remained in leadership positions.

The PCF responded to these developments in October 1974 by holding a special party congress. After the congress, Roland Leroy, Marchais' collaborator and rival, became the editor of *L'Humanité* and began to criticize the Socialists more sharply. Even at the special congress, however, Marchais raised a number of "decisive" questions: Why were the Socialists attempting to "balance" their strength and that of the Communists within the Left? Was not this an indication of disloyalty? In criticizing the Communists, were the Socialists not placing themselves "objectively" on the side of reaction? Were they not guilty of "anti-communism"? Did they really accept the Common Program? Was it possible to cooperate with the Socialists when they had been willing to enter into electoral alliances with centrists and others for the municipal elections?

After a short illness, Marchais returned to the attack. Quoting, of all people, Charles de Gaulle, he called Mitterrand "sure of himself and domineering" and accused him of accepting an invitation to visit the President of the French Republic! Marchais also lashed out against the Mayor of Marseilles, Gaston Deferre, a top Socialist leader, for welcoming Giscard d'Estaing when the latter visited Marseilles. More substantively, he declared that the Communist Party would accept nothing but the Common Program of the Left *in toto*.[4] To appreciate the significance of his declaration, one must keep in mind that during the presidential election of May 1974 the Communists had become increasingly nonchalant about the Common Program and had soft-pedaled many of its provisions by stating that it would be up to the President of the Republic (Mitterrand, if he were elected) to exercise his discretion in implementing the Program. Now it was all or nothing.

The battle dragged on until a summit meeting was held on June 19, 1975. This brought together the leaders of the PCF, the Socialist Party, and the Left Radicals, but it produced only a general conciliatory statement.[5]

As far as the Portuguese situation is concerned, the quaintest and most explosive interpretation of events there came from the head of the PCF-controlled *Confédération Générale du Travail* (CGT). After spending three days in Lisbon, George Séguy depicted the closing down of the Portuguese Socialist paper, *República*, as "a classic labor dispute" (*un conflit du travail classique*). To all those who knew—as the Socialists in France certainly did—that virtually all printing in France is dominated by the CGT, this must have been frightening. To make

[2] *Le Monde* (Paris), June 20, 1975; *Année Politique 1974*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1975, p. 100.

[3] *Le Monde*, June 20, 1975.

[4] *Année Politique 1974*, p. 119.

[5] *Le Monde*, June 20, 1975.



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matters worse, the French Communists held that the Socialists in Portugal were allied with the forces of reaction. According to Marchais, the Portuguese Socialist leader, Mario Soares, did not know what he was doing and what he was saying. He was "objectively" doing the work of the monopolies, of the reactionaries, of the USA, and of Giscard d'Estaing. Neither Marchais nor other PCF spokesmen said a word about the electoral strength of the Portuguese Socialists or mentioned the majority-minority dichotomy, which according to the "soft" line should be respected. Many in France therefore asked whether this was what the French Communists meant by plurality of parties and by peaceful assumption of power. Particularly galling to the Communists, however, was the fact that their Socialist allies were among those doing the asking. The Socialists, too, were engaged in anti-communism! As for the Socialists, they found the PCF's comparison of Soares with former Chilean President Eduardo Frei (a Christian Democrat) particularly offensive.

AND SO, as Professor Tiersky points out, the French Communists are in a sense caught in a box that they have built for themselves. To go forward and further soften their profile would be to move perilously far from the shelter of countercommunity and revolutionary *avant-gardisme*. It would be to shed their image and adopt the democratic values to which they have paid lip service for over 20 years. It would mean losing their militants, demoralizing their cadres, and seeing the power that they have overtly worshipped—that is, electoral and governmental power—take precedence over *all else*.

On the other hand, to harden their profile and return, so to speak, to their home base would be to lose the manifold contacts that they have established with all parties of the Left; to violate the Common Program; to lose many of their followers; and even to force the Socialists into alliances with bourgeois parties—perhaps even with the Gaullists.

In this reviewer's opinion, future events, and particularly the international situation, will determine which face the party will show in the coming years, or how many face-liftings the party may undergo. Moreover, while Marxism-Leninism is a storehouse from which any and all tactics can be supported, it seems to this reviewer that the real and unchangeable essence of the party is best conveyed by a quotation from Roger Garaudy's otherwise nonpolitical, rather sentimental, and at times over-religious autobiography. Recounting his experience at the 19th Party Congress—when he was accorded the last rites before his excommunication from a party he had joined 36 years before, from a Central Committee of which he had been a member for 24 years, and from a Politbureau where he had served for 12 years—he writes:

*My last words were followed by a terrible silence. My body felt heavy like a stone. I have the impression that I am falling into a pit as I go back to sit among two thousand comrades most of whom were until yesterday my friends and among whom not one, not even among those who shared some of my views, dared to come to my support. When the meeting was over everybody draws away from me as if I were a leper. . . . For the first time in my life I think of committing suicide. . . .*[6]

[6] *Parole d'homme* (A Man's Word), Paris, Robert Laffont, 1975, p. 22.



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# Studies of Nordic Communism

By Richard Cornell

KNUT LANGFELDT: *Moskva-tesene i norsk politikk* (The Moscow Theses in Norwegian Politics). Oslo, Universitetsforlaget, 1972.
PER MAURSETH: *Fra Moskvateser til Kristiania-forslag. Det norske Arbeiderparti og Komintern fra 1921 til februar 1923* (From the Moscow Theses to the Kristiania Proposal. The Norwegian Labor Party and the Comintern from 1921 until February 1923). Oslo, Pax Forlag, 1972.
TROND GILBERG: *The Soviet Communist Party and Scandinavian Communism: The Norwegian Case. Oslo,* Universitetsforlaget, 1973.
MOGENS NIELSEN: *Enhed i arbeiderbevaegelsen. Kilder til belysning af forhandlingerne mellem Danmarks kommunistiske Parti og Socialdemokratiet 1945* (Unity in the Labor Movement. Sources Which Illuminate the Negotiations between the Communist Party of Denmark and the Social Democrats in 1945). Copenhagen, Fremad, 1973.
A.F. UPTON: *Communism in Scandinavia and Finland: Politics of Opportunity.* (With contributions by Peter P. Rohde and Aa. Sparring.) Garden City, NY, Anchor Press/Doubleday, 1973.
ULRICH WAGNER: *Finnlands Kommunisten. Volksfrontexperiment und Parteispaltung, 1966-1970* (Finland's Communists. Popular Front Experiment and Party Split, 1966-1970). Stuttgart, Verlag W. Kohlhammer, 1971.
AINO KUUSINEN: *The Rings of Destiny.* New York, William Morrow and Company, 1974.
CARL MADSEN: *Naar bladene falder* (When the Leaves Fall). Copenhagen, Demos, 1975.

THE GENERAL lack of interest in Nordic communism is regrettable. As most of the books under review demonstrate, the experience of the Nordic Communist parties can shed a good deal of light on the dilemma confronting nonruling CP's. The basic problem of such parties is, of course, that they assert themselves as a force for the radical transformation of existing society, but at the same time they must exist and function within that society. How can they increase their influence and promote their revolutionary goals from within the system without losing their revolutionary identity?

Until recently, nonruling parties generally resolved this dilemma by accepting political isolation as the price to be paid for the retention of their revolutionary image. Traditionally, the CP's have been defined by their implacable hostility to existing institutions, their vigorous adherence to the Leninist norms of party organization, and their uncritical acceptance of Soviet experience and leadership. Most nonruling parties, however, are no longer content to adhere to these postures. They wish to break out of their political isolation and have adopted a peaceful path to socialism in the hope of doing so. This has opened up many avenues of opportunity. However, it has also called into question all of the traditional elements of Communist identity. Indeed, there appear to be certain imperatives inherent in the new strategy which make it difficult, if not impossible, for the parties to retain their traditional commitments.

To different degrees, the books under review contribute to an understanding of this interplay between revolutionary strategy and revolutionary identity. Most of them are scholarly studies which focus on various broad or narrow segments of the histories of the Nordic CP's. One is an annotated collection of documents (concerning the unity negotiations between the Communist and Social Democratic parties of Denmark in 1945). Two are the personal statements of individuals, one a Finn, the other a Dane, who were active Communists until disappointment and disillusionment led to a rupture—in the first case, to exile in a Soviet forced labor camp; in the second, to an unwanted expulsion from the party.

THE TRADITIONAL definition of Communist identity drew almost exclusively on the experience of the Russian party. In the early



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1920's, however, many of the fledgling Communist parties were defining for themselves what it meant to be a revolutionary party. Not all Communists accepted the Leninist version unquestioningly. The Norwegian experience provides an illustrative example of the resistance perceptible throughout the Communist movement at this time. Knut Langfeldt and Per Maurseth provide detailed case studies of this important phenomenon.

Langfeldt is concerned with the debate in 1920 within the Norwegian Labor Party (DNA), a founding member of the Communist International, over acceptance of the 21 Conditions. His study, originally published in 1961 and now reprinted, emphasizes the heterogeneity of the party. Later developments were to obscure the fact that within this heterogeneity the dominant mood was one of independence, self-determination, and adaption to existing realities. In the long run, the "revolutionary pragmatism" propounded by the leader Martin Tranmael reflected the basic orientation of the severely divided party.

Despite an enthusiasm for international solidarity and an emotional attachment to revolution, the large majority of the members of the DNA did not, in fact, accept the 21 Conditions. Irreconcilably different conceptions of what communism meant in terms of revolutionary strategy, party organization, and relations between Communist parties collided with one another. Per Maurseth probes this confrontration and misunderstanding in considerably greater detail than does Langfeldt, following the conflict to its turning point in February 1923. Maurseth does an admirable job of sorting out and illuminating the complex situation that existed in the party in these early years.

Perhaps the most comprehensive treatment of the consequences of the conflict between different conceptions of communism is provided by Trond Gilberg, who reviews the long history of Norwegian leftist factionalism to the present. The DNA was split and written out of the Communist movement because it would not subordinate its policies and organization to the Russian party. The new Communist party that was formed has wandered in the political wilderness ever since. An essentially uncritical acceptance of revolutionary strategy and tactics determined by the CPSU placed the Norwegian Communist Party (NKP), as most Communist parties, outside the mainstream of national political life. "The NKP through its policies . . . isolated itself from Norwegian society in general and the national labor movement in particular" (p. 63).

Decades after its initial frustration and suppression, the conception of communism represented by the Norwegian Labor Party in 1920 has surfaced again in the course of the last 10 to 15 years. All of the European nonruling parties have come under increasing pressure to abandon the traditional Leninist definition. In the Nordic countries such pressure has been all but irresistible. The new revolutionary strategy is a significant revision of what Lenin saw as a proper revolutionary attitude toward the existing system.[1] There also has been a virtual abandonment of the concept of "dictatorship of the proletariat." In addition, the parties have been searching for a new definition of "democratic centralism." They are seeking to eliminate the stultifying bureaucratic effects of the term as it has been traditionally interpreted in practice. At the same time, they are endeavoring to enter the mainstream of national politics as parties in tune with national democratic traditions. In the case of the NKP, Gilberg notes that the party "has become one of the staunchest supporters of Norwegian political structures and institutions, Norwegian national heritage, Norwegian culture, and the traditionally strong ties with Sweden, Denmark, Finland, and Iceland" (p. 187).

IN THEIR EFFORTS to break out of isolation, the basic political tactic adopted by the European nonruling Communist parties has been the promotion of Popular Front alliances and governments. In the Scandinavian countries as elsewhere, Popular Front tactics have had a checkered history. Two of the books under review afford an interesting contrast of the respective experiences of the Danish and Finnish Communists in promoting Popular Front alliances in the aftermath of World War II, while a third concentrates on the more recent participation of the Finnish party in a Popular Front government in the years 1966-70.

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[1] Lenin is often cited as the source of the peaceful path to socialism. Khrushchev did so in his report of the Central Committee to the 20th CPSU Congress. However, the thrust of Lenin's remarks in 1916 was simply to admit the possibility of an *exception* to the rule that civil war was necessary to overthrow the bourgeoisie. There could be a peaceful surrender of the bourgeoisie in a small country, after the revolution had succeeded in a neighboring big country. But Lenin thought it "much more likely" that "even in small states, socialism will *not* be achieved without civil war, and for that reason the *only* programme of international Social Democracy must be recognition of civil war . . . ." (Lenin's emphasis) V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. 23 (August 1916-March 1917), p. 69. Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1964.



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It is clear from the collection of documents edited by Mogens Nielsen that the Popular Front as pursued by the Danish Communist Party (DKP) in 1945 was bound to fail. Efforts to achieve a merger between the DKP and the Social Democratic Party (SD) proved to be a futile exercise, although the Communists did participate for a brief time in a coalition government. The problem was that each party talked of socialism but understood by that term something quite different.

Committed to the norms of what the Communists ridiculed as "bourgeois democracy," the Social Democrats in 1945 feared the ties between the DKP and the Soviet Union. The Communist assertion that the Soviet Union was the model for the necessary period of the dictatorship of the proletariat (a conception alien to Social Democratic notions of socialism and democracy) was a major obstacle to the cooperation, not to mention the fusion, of the parties. DKP chief Axel Larsen articulated the Communist view at the second meeting between the parties' negotiating committees in June 1945, declaring that one's "attitude toward the Soviet Union clearly is decisive for determining if one is pursuing a genuinely socialist policy" and is "the touchstone for determining if one also wants socialism in one's own country" (p. 27). This argument could hardly have been expected to evoke a positive response from the Social Democrats.

Obviously, the DKP wished to increase its political influence. Whether its primary objective was to promote revolution or to serve Soviet foreign policy interests remains a matter of continuing debate. In any event, the party was willing to make alterations in its revolutionary strategy but would do little to modify its traditional revolutionary identity. Still committed to promoting "revolution from above," the DKP was more interested in reducing the influence of the Social Democrats than in achieving working-class unity based on compromise and cooperation. At the same time that interparty negotiations were going on, the DKP leaders were openly attacking Social Democrats and striving to build up a "united front from below."

The Communists wished to get agreement on programmatic points that emphasized their attitude of confrontation with the existing system. The struggle for socialism, with the Soviet Union as a model, was paramount. The Social Democrats, on the other hand, continuously sought assurances that the Communists would accept "democratic principles" and a legal, peaceful path to a society owing little to the Soviet model. Although the DKP indicated that it was willing to "stand on the basis of the constitution," the Social Democrats remained distrustful. In short order, the merger effort fell apart.

THE FINNISH Communist Party (SKP) had more success in establishing Popular Front alliances, but the benefits to itself were dubious at best. First in 1945-48, and again in 1966-70, it participated through a front organization, the SKDL (Finnish People's Democratic League), in Popular Front governments with the Social Democrats and the Agrarians.[2]

A. F. Upton discusses the first period in the course of his broader history of the party through the mid-1960's. It is his view that SKP participation in the postwar government coalition, and the agreement on which it was based, "were traps in which SKP got caught, for it was consistently cheated by its partners, used for their convenience, and finally thrown over" (p. 266). The SKP was saddled with the responsibility of governing but was not able to use its position within the government to effect fundamental social change. Its Front partners refused to implement those agreed policies that might have had some impact on the basic structure of society. In short, the SKP was not able to "operate the organs of a bourgeois society to promote its own policies" (p. 255).

Upton is certainly correct in asserting that the Communists came out losers in this first application of the new Popular Front tactics. Not only was the SKP unable to use its weight to secure major reforms and a "progressive government," but its efforts to participate in the coalition government led to deepening internal rifts within the party. The only thing that prevented these internecine differences from becoming critical was the persistence of the traditional attitude of devotion to the CPSU, which served as a unifying factor inside the party.

Ironically, however, this very attitude goes a long way toward explaining the failure of the Popular Front effort. The "SKP rendered its self-appointed task, the leadership of a united democratic front, almost impossible, and by exactly the kind of mistake that

[2] During the past six months, the SKDL has again participated in a government coalition. However, the latter did not result from a Popular Front alliance but was rather a coalition "government of national emergency" joined by all the five major parties in Finland. As this issue went to press, the future of that coalition government was in doubt.



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had proved to be fatal after 1928—a blind and unreasoning loyalty to policies laid down in Moscow" (p. 301). "What was affected adversely was the hope . . . of adding to . . . [the SKP's] hard core of support significant elements from the Social Democrat workers, the small farmers, and the progressive bourgeoisie, [a hope] which was frustrated because these people accepted the identification of SKP with a slavish devotion to Russian interests . . ." (p. 301). The traditional relationship to the Soviet Union was an insurmountable obstacle to a successful coalition strategy.

Some might find Upton's interpretations of this and other periods of SKP history and of the party's role in Finnish society less than dispassionate. Nonetheless, he has provided a very readable "short course" on Finnish communism through the middle 1960's. It might be noted in passing that well over two-thirds of the book is devoted to his study of the Finnish party, a fact that makes the title of the volume misleading (three very short summaries of developments in other Nordic CP's might better have been left to another outlet[3]).

THE VOLUME by Ulrich Wagner concentrates on the second Finnish experience with the Popular Front, from 1966 to 1970. During the 18 years in which the SKP was on the sidelines, much had happened—within and without the party. By 1966, internal party problems, as well as relations between the Finnish and Soviet parties, had assumed critical importance.

Wagner's primary focus is on the consequences for the party of its participation in the Popular Front. As in its earlier effort at collaboration, the impact on the SKP was by and large adverse. This time, internal differences over party policy led to a virtual split in party ranks and to a significant drop in the electoral strength of the SKP by the elections of 1970. Wagner documents in considerable detail the causes of dissension within the SKP, as well as the intervention of the Soviet Communist party in an effort to contain, if not resolve, the developing rift.

The Finnish experience demonstrated quite clearly that certain imperatives are imposed on a Communist party with its acceptance of a coalition strategy. First, the leadership must place the highest priority on maximizing the legitimacy and respectability of the party within the society at large, since the weight of the Communist vote is a decisive factor in determining the strength of the party within the coalition. At the same time, the leadership must be conscious of the need to instill a degree of confidence and trust in its coalition partners with respect to its intentions. And as the success of the Popular Front is to be measured in terms of the "progressive" reforms that can be introduced, the party must also become deeply involved in the management of the existing bourgeois system.

These demands place great strains on the traditional revolutionary identity of the party, a situation that in turn increases tension within the party. As has been suggested, the peaceful path to socialism is in itself a repudiation of a fundamental aspect of the traditional identify and definition of communism. Those wedded to traditionalist principles thus reject the new strategy. The search for a new meaning for the concept of democratic centralism opens doors that many insist should remain closed.

When, in responding to the events in Czechoslovakia in 1968, the SKP leadership called the traditional relationship with the CPSU into question, the party reached the brink of outright schism. Through covert intervention the CPSU was able to impose a compromise, but it was a tenuous one at best. The "traditionalists" were induced to exercise restraint in their criticism of, and opposition to, the peaceful path of socialism and the Popular Front tactic; the "modernists" had to forego further separation from the "Soviet model" and to keep their objections to Soviet policies within acceptable limits.

It is clear, in sum, that during the 1966-70 coalition period and since, the SKP leadership has pursued its peaceful path to socialism under severe limitations. It has been inhibited within its own party by the "traditionalist" minority opposed in principle to a peaceful strategy. Also, its prospects for participation in Popular Front governments have been, and continue to be, dependent upon developments among the Social Democrats, whose ranks include a strong faction opposed to Popular Front coalitions. Above all, perhaps, the SKP leadership has been affected by the special relationship between the Finnish state and the Soviet Union. By dealing directly with the Finnish President and Finnish government, the So-

[3] The chapter on Sweden is an abridgment by Aake Sparring of his *Fraan Höglund till Hermansson. Om revisionismen i Sveriges kommunistiska parti* (From Höglund to Hermansson. Revisionism in the Communist Party of Sweden), Stockholm, Bonnier, 1967. An English translation of this work—as well as of the Langfeldt, Maurseth, and Nielsen books reviewed here—would be of great value.



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viet leaders have been able to restrict or expand the opportunities and influence of the SKP. And, as Wagner suggests, the Soviet leaders have shown little inclination to place a high priority on the Finnish party's interests.

While Wagner offers many useful insights into the dynamics of the SKP as a party, he unfortunately devotes almost no discussion to the participation of the SKP and of its front organization, the SKDL, in the government during the years of the Popular Front. What sort of governing partner was it? How did the party and its ministers fulfill their governmental responsibilities? What was the frame of reference within which it participated in formulating and implementing national policy? There have been few cases of Communist ministers participating in a ruling coalition, and even a glimpse into this area in the recent Finnish experience would have been rewarding.

WE TURN, finally, to the memoirs under review. Personal accounts can often tell us a great deal about a Communist party or about life in a Communist country. More often, we learn less about communism than we do about the authors as individuals—though such narratives can, of course, be interesting and informative. Aino Kuusinen's book is a disappointment from any perspective. She offers little insight into the personality and career of her husband, Otto Kuusinen, the Finnish Communist leader who for years served in the Comintern in Moscow, helped direct the prewar clandestine SKP, and eventually served on the CPSU Politburo. Aside from some details and vignettes of life within the apparatus in Moscow, we learn little not already known about other Soviet and Comintern leaders in whose circles she lived for some years, or about the Comintern itself. As she was never a member of the SKP, we learn virtually nothing about the Finnish party either. Finally we are never able to get a glimpse of the human being residing in the figure whose experiences are described in the book. The author seldom allows her own self to intrude upon her story. Why did she become a revolutionary? What did it mean to her? Why did she marry Kuusinen, and what were their relations? What led her to obey the Kremlin's call to return from Japan to Moscow in 1937, only to be sent to Stalin's labor camps? Her years of incarceration were a tragic personal experience, but it is impossible to discover to what extent she may have been disillusioned. For Aino Kuusinen gives us no idea of the original illusions that motivated her to grasp those "rings of destiny" for which she reached.

By sharp contrast, we are left in little doubt about what moves Carl Madsen. An active 72-year-old and a member of the Danish Communist Party (DKP) since 1929, Madsen has emerged in recent years as the *vieillard terrible* of Danish communism. Never a member of the party hierarchy or of parliament, he was not involved in the factional struggles within the party. As a practicing lawyer, Madsen developed a reputation as a defender of radicals and radical causes. His book is more of a political testament than a memoir: a collection of speeches and articles combined with some autobiographical content, it is the somewhat florid *cri du coeur* of a frustrated revolutionary.

*In my youth, our party stood for me as a luxuriant and leafy tree in the full summer splendor of hope and enthusiasm. I have had to taste bitter fruit . . . treachery . . . falsehood . . . sham and fraud. Much of what our leaders swore and promised was lies and bluster. . . . Great but empty words. However, as life's storms blew the leaves of false illusion from the tree, a new beauty emerged. . . . Against a grey winter sky, the healthy trunk and the strong branches now appear, deeply-rooted in the people, who can be deceived, but who have never wavered.* (p. 156)

As these words suggest, Madsen's book is an emotional and uninhibited tirade against the DKP's leadership and ideological spokesmen, whom he charges with incompetence and suppression of debate. The publication of the book under New Left auspices led to Madsen's expulsion from the DKP in the spring of 1975, climaxing two years in which his refusal to terminate or mute his criticisms became increasingly intolerable to a party still committed to democratic centralism. What is of more significance than his personal history, however, is the issues concerning party relations and party strategy that he raises.

Madsen represents the strong conservative or traditionalist tendency within all Communist parties. In Scandinavia, its strength varies from party to party. It is probably strongest in Finland, where the virtual split of 1969 has been papered over at best. It is weakest in Denmark, where earlier splits and withdrawals have kept recent differences to a minimum. Perhaps the success of the DKP in maintaining its image of unity made Madsen's criticism all the more noticeable. If he were a Finn, he undoubtedly would still be in the party.



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The great fear of traditionalists such as Madsen is that the Communist parties, in seeking to increase their political strength within the existing system, will cease to be forces for revolutionary change. The traditionalists argue that even if success to date has been limited, the parties' goals can eventually reach full fruition only through adherence to classical Marxist-Leninist roles, strategies, and relationships. They do not admit that changed circumstances necessitate what is, in effect, a revision of the Leninist definition of a revolutionary party.

Madsen's first open criticism of the party leadership came in response to its initially strong condemnation of the invasion of Czechoslovakia. He continues "to approve 100%" (p. 148) the Soviet action. His attitude to relations with the Soviet Union apparently has not changed since he first joined the party. "We seek our identity in an absolute devotion to the Soviet Union and its Communist Party. We have unqualified confidence in the Soviet Union and its armed forces" (p. 98).

The leadership of the DKP, however, no longer accepts such a view of its relations with the CPSU. Although it has been the least critical of all the Nordic parties, it nevertheless has made an effort to place some distance between itself and the Soviet Communist Party.

A new draft action program adopted at the 24th DKP Congress in January 1973 is apparently what brought Madsen's frustrations out into the open. The program's formal endorsement of the peaceful path to socialism challenged his traditional views of the revolutionary role of a Communist party and its relationship to the existing system. His bitter opposition to acceptance—even as a way station—of bourgeois state institutions, his rejection of "minister communism" and all "parliamentary illusions," and his desire to cleanse the party of "the disastrous opportunism" that is "so fatal for all Communist parties" (p. 101) have put him out of tune with the party leadership and the party majority. More important for Madsen himself, his continuing criticism has put him outside the party.

TO SUM UP the collective message of these volumes, the efforts of the Nordic Communist parties to assert themselves as representatives of the progressive aspirations of society have had varying degrees of success. Despite the greater prospects that the peaceful path to socialism and Popular Front tactics present, severe difficulties stand in the way of the expansion of Communist influence. The parties' past subservience to Soviet policy and their insistence on retaining some commitment to Leninist traditions have nurtured a deep skepticism among the Nordic peoples that is very difficult for the Communists to overcome. All political groups to which they look for potential allies have serious doubts about Communist intentions. At the same time, the definition of the parties' revolutionary identity calls into question their very existence.



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# Elite Politics in East Germany

**By John M. Starrels**

THOMAS ARTHUR BAYLIS: *The Technical Intelligentsia and the East German Elite*. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1974.
DALE ROY HERSPRING: *East German Civil-Military Relations: The Impact of Technology, 1949-1972*. New York, Praeger, 1973.

FOR THE FIRST time in postwar history, the future status of communism within the German Democratic Republic (GDR) is no longer questioned in either Communist or non-Communist Europe. Thanks to the four-power Berlin Agreements of 1972 and the subsequent intra-German treaties of 1973-74, the GDR's entry into the international non-Communist community has been consummated, and the East German regime enjoys a level of political acceptance that its leaders would have found it difficult to anticipate ten years ago.

Although no one can say with assurance—since most Western observers of East German politics do not enjoy direct entrée to top decision-making groups within the GDR—how its leaders feel about the outcome of the diplomatic struggle of the last few years, there are abundant public indications that they are pleased with the results—and for good reason. But what about the larger questions of political evolution which engage the daily attention of the East German regime? Two recent American contributions to the study of elite politics in the GDR supply some additional insights into this broader area of political behavior. In both cases, the analytical focus is on the recruitment of technological elites and the long-run impact of this process on the political structure.

THOMAS BAYLIS' *The Technical Intelligentsia and the East German Elite* is the best contribution to the field of East German elite research in the United States to date. Indeed, with the possible exception of Peter Ludz's masterful study of recruitment to the Central Committee of the East German Communist party, the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (SED),[1] this book (a revised adaptation of a Ph.D. dissertation, completed in 1968[2]) is the most comprehensive analysis of elite politics yet to appear in the West.

Baylis has chosen to investigate two broad questions bearing on the evolution of elite behavior and politics in the GDR. First, he focuses on how the SED apparatus—the Politburo, Secretariat, and Central Committee—has responded to the challenges and opportunities of the technological revolution, looking at the question in the larger perspective of how the party has grappled with the problem of gaining long-run political legitimacy within East German society. Baylis suggests that a pattern of elite cooptation has taken place. That is to say, at the same time that the SED has employed the new stratum of managers and planners in the task of achieving its vision of Marxist-Leninist socialism in the GDR, it has, through the recruitment of what the author labels the "technical intelligentsia" into the institutions of governmental and party power, made it possible for younger generations of East Germans to make their imprint on the broader social structure.[3]

The second question logically emerges as Baylis is led to inquire into the future evolution of Communist ideology and technocratic rationality in the GDR. Citing American Sovietologist Jeremy Azrael's argument positing "the weakness of managerial influence" on the ground that "the apparat is

[1] See, Peter Christian Ludz, *The Changing Party Elite in East Germany*, Cambridge, Mass., MIT Press, 1972.

[2] Thomas Arthur Baylis, *Communist Elites and Industrial Society*, Ph.D. dissertation, 1968, University of California (Berkeley).

[3] For some extended observations on the future opportunities facing emergent elites and the mass public in the GDR, see John Starrels and Anita Mallinckrodt, *Politics in the German Democratic Republic*, New York, Praeger, 1975, Chaps. 2-5 and 8.



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still the principal custodian of the symbols of legitimacy," Baylis asserts a contrary view:

*I have tried to show that in the GDR it is the guardian only of the old quasicharismatic symbols. While it has sought to appropriate as well a legitimacy based on rational-legal performance criteria, it has been able to do so effectively only by opening the political elite to other groups—particularly but not only the technical intelligentsia—and by at least raising the possibility of some restriction on its own powers (through "socialist legality," decentralization, new and expanded forms of political participation, etc.).* (pp. 274-75)

Baylis acknowledges that what the SED apparatus chooses to grant in the form of expanded participatory opportunities it can also take away, but he still inclines to the cautiously optimistic conclusion that technocratic influence will continue to grow within the East German political system. Thus, he writes:

*If, and as, the "technocrats" increase their numbers and influence in the centers of political decision (particularly the Central Committee and its aligned organs), it will be by quiet and gradual steps, of which the participants themselves will scarcely be aware. At least in the Soviet bloc the managerial revolution will be no revolution at all but a barely visible process of alliance building, infiltration, and absorption.* (p. 277)

The next analytical task to which Baylis addresses himself is to assess the content and style of technocratic influence, as they now manifest themselves and are likely to evolve in the future. He supplies some insight into this murky area, at least to the degree that he argues, realistically, that the technocratic influence will probably make itself felt in the future predominantly in the area of administrative reform and not in the area of ideological transformation. The "new elite" may possess a different attitude toward the tactical pursuit of socialism in the GDR, he points out, but they are in substantive agreement with the older stratum of SED bureaucrats on the necessity and legitimacy of orthodox communism in East Germany.

DALE HERSPRING'S study of the impact of technology on civil-military relations in the GDR reflects a parallel but more narrow analytical concern. That is to say, he fixes his sights on the limited area of East German military politics as a particularly fascinating dimension of how the SED has attempted to meet the opportunities and challenges posed by the technological revolution. In choosing to pursue the subject of military influence within the GDR, the author also unavoidably reopens the older question of the impact of military groups within German society generally—an aspect of his study which makes it of interest to historians of 19th- and early 20th-century German politics as well.

Herspring's main purpose is to unravel the complex relationship that exists between the SED and the East German military establishment—the National People's Army (NVA). How much power can upwardly mobile officer groups wield within the SED? And does the NVA possess a specific professional interest which in some manner differentiates its views from those of the SED? The author weighs these questions in the light of officer recruitment practices over the last two decades and arrives at two main conclusions.

The first is that the NVA has been subject to complete and unchallenged party control from its inception to the present. While Herspring acknowledges that the army does have a voice in SED policymaking, he sees no question about the primacy of the party's positions on all matters relating to military-political security, to the point where it is impossible to separate out a "pure" military position different from that of the party.

The author's second conclusion is that the NVA, in line with broader currents of technological change at work within East German society, has increasingly become an elite of highly-trained individuals whose main interest lies in the advancement of technologically-based concepts and policies within the framework of SED-determined military concerns. He points out, however, that this does not at all mean that the emerging stratum of articulate officers studiously avoids political issues; rather, he sees it as reflecting the firm commitment of the officers to the principles of official Marxism-Leninism. Thus he concludes:

*Although they do not represent a perfect combination of "expertness" and "redness," East German officers do combine both of these characteristics to a considerable degree. They are not only highly trained military officers but also politically aware participants in party activities.* (p. 183)

It seems unfortunate that Herspring did not expand the scope of his study to encompass a wider



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range of considerations bearing on the status of military authority within the GDR. While one certainly should not lose sight of the monumental difficulties facing anyone who attempts to probe systematically into one of the most sensitive areas of East German life, the absence of a broader analytical vision does detract from the significance of Herspring's pioneering effort. In this respect, Baylis' study stands out because it provides a larger intellectual context for analyzing the role of elite groups in the politics and society of the GDR.

THE GDR'S ACCEPTANCE into the larger European community raises the question of how much change the GDR can absorb. The most casual student of GDR affairs is aware that over large periods of its history the East German Communist regime has been preoccupied with the relatively unhappy task of keeping the foundations of its political authority intact. Born in the aftermath of the 1947-48 Berlin blockade and forced to compete against a more dynamic West Germany throughout the 1950's and 1960's, the GDR is now called upon to accept a "new" relationship with the West German Federal Republic which will bring in its institutional wake an invasion of Western visitors and influences —and these considerations do not even take into account the impact on the regime's authority of the Berlin Wall or the insecure status of the GDR within the Soviet bloc. Nonetheless, the GDR has survived. Without ignoring the powerful influence exerted by the Soviet Union on East German domestic politics, one can hardly argue with the proposition that the GDR's ability to survive and prosper has been based largely on the performance of its economic and social elites. And the main reason why these elites have been able to perform so well is that they have functioned under a leadership which, though the most orthodox in Communist Eastern Europe (with the obvious exception of Albania's), has also been one of the most pragmatic.

The emergence of Erich Honecker has, if anything, accentuated this tradition of pragmatic leadership. As Baylis suggests, new and more flexible patterns of social control exerted by more flexible SED functionaries will not, in themselves, bring about a more tolerant atmosphere in East Germany. At least within certain areas of the social structure, however, there are indications that elite stewardship within the GDR has brought about a perceptible loosening of SED strictures against the airing of critical attitudes toward East German society. The cautious emergence of a new spirit within the performing arts supplies an interesting element of support to this argument.

Though East German policy has been in flux since the mid-1960's, the advent of Honecker has apparently accelerated the development of a more tolerant SED policy in this sensitive area. Two important tendencies deserve attention.

First, there are increasingly strong indications that the SED is prepared to tolerate rising levels of "spontaneous" artistic expression despite the simultaneous existence of muted countertendencies at work within the party hierarchy. Not surprisingly, this gradual shift away from a previously unbending attitude toward the social utility of artistic expression has not been easy for the party elite to accept, not only because most of its members acquired their formative intellectual experiences and psychological orientations during the height of Stalinist influence, but also because the regime previously assumed that loyalty to official Marxism-Leninism meant unbending adherence to the hoariest of SED dictums on the role of the arts.

Second, as the SED's policy toward artistic expression has become more elastic, so has its willingness to allow successful writers, poets, etc., increasing access to receptive audiences in the West. Admittedly, the Soviet Union and other bloc countries have also become committed to similar policies of peaceful engagement with the West. Nevertheless, there is an instructive contrast between the East German and Soviet situations. While Soviet writers have in most cases gained their Western audiences in spite of the desires of the Soviet authorities (witness the cases of Andrey Sakharov and Alexander Solzhenitsyn, the GDR's tolerance of an outflow of East German cultural representatives, such as Guenther Kunert (poet) and Christa Wolf (writer), on visits to the West has served to underline the regime's growing sense of international and domestic confidence.

However, attempts to apply simplistic "spill-over" theories to the future evolution of East German politics are doomed in the face of considerations such as ideology and the potential for internal political relaxation. From the Western viewpoint, even a limited amount of liberalization in the performing arts sector is encouraging, but this development probably will have little, if any, visible impact on the SED's methods of overall political mobilization and control. In terms of future elite behavior within the GDR, the pros-



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pects are relatively clear on at least two crucial points. First, under Honecker as under Ulbricht, a cautious pragmatism will probably continue to characterize the political orientation of the East German elites. Second, the "managerial revolution," as Baylis refers to it, will continue to go forward as the SED grows in confidence on the domestic and international levels, but the transformation will be subtle, slow, and carefully controlled.[4]

[4] For a more comprehensive discussion of political prospects in the GDR, see Starrels and Mallinckrodt, *op. cit.*, Chap. 9.

# Moscow and the Middle East: Constraints and Opportunities

**By Shahram Chubin**

ROBERT O. FREEDMAN: *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970.* New York, Praeger, 1975.
ISMET GIRITLI: *Superpowers in the Middle East.* Istanbul, Istanbul University, 1972.
ARNOLD KRAMMER: *The Forgotten Friendship: Israel and the Soviet Bloc, 1947-53.* Urbana, University of Illinois, 1974.
WALTER LAQUEUR: *Confrontation: The Middle East and World Politics.* New York, Quadrangle, 1974.
IVO J. LEDERER and WAYNE S. VUCINICH, Eds.: *The Soviet Union and the Middle East: The Post-World War II Era.* Stanford, Cal., Hoover Institution Press, 1974.
YAACOV RO'I, Ed.: *From Encroachment to Involvement: A Documentary Study of Soviet Policy in the Middle East, 1945-1973.* New York, Wiley, and Jerusalem, Israel Universities Press, 1974.

TO UNDERSTAND Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East, one must identify those broad factors that condition Soviet foreign policy in general, assess the importance accorded the region in the hierarchy of Soviet priorities, and differentiate among various parts of the region itself. One can discuss geographic and other factors which have resulted in continuities of Soviet/Russian interest in the region, but one must also take into account strategic and technological innovations that may have created discontinuities. In addition, one must examine how both the changing configuration of the international system and features peculiar to the Middle East condition Soviet foreign policy there.

All of the books under review deal with Soviet involvement in the Middle East, although no two do so from the same standpoint. Each differs in the emphasis placed on Soviet policy *per se*, stresses different themes, and utilizes different methods—with varying results. The works edited by Yaacov Ro'i and by Ivo J. Lederer and Wayne S. Vucinich focus on Soviet policy since World War II. The Ro'i volume is a comprehensive and carefully annotated collection of important documents. It is an essential tool for students of the international relations of the Middle East, one which, by emphasizing Soviet relations with the region, nicely complements J. C. Hurewitz's standard work (recently revised and reissued[1]). The Lederer-Vucinich volume is a collection of nine basically historical essays—the product of a conference held at Stanford in 1969. While some individual contributions are useful—for example, those of John C. Campbell on the USSR and the Arab-Israeli conflict and of George Harris on Soviet relations with

[1] J. C. Hurewitz, *The Middle East and North Africa in World Politics: A Documentary Record*, New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1975.



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Turkey, as well as Ivo Lederer's Introduction—the papers are uneven in scope and depth and are connected by only the broadest of themes. The essay by Firuz Kazemzadeh on Soviet-Iranian relations is particularly thin fare, limiting itself to description and covering the decade of the 1960's in two pages. The result is not as rewarding as the earlier study on Russian foreign policy edited by Lederer,[2] which also took the historical approach.

The volume by Robert Freedman, *Soviet Policy Toward the Middle East Since 1970,* is bold in scope, thorough in documentation, and keen in analysis. Arnold Krammer's study of Israel's relations with the Soviet bloc in the years 1947-53 is not very illuminating about Soviet policy, whereas Walter Laqueur's topical study of the October 1973 war does shed light on Soviet policy, even if in a broader context of regional politics, superpower relationships, developments in the Atlantic Alliance, and oil diplomacy. Finally, there is the Giritli monograph, a general overview of the activities of the superpowers in the Middle East; this is essentially an extended essay marred both by its narrative form and its sloppy presentation.

Generally missing from all these books is an attempt to view contemporary Soviet foreign policy in the Middle East in a wider perspective—to understand those constraints, global *and* regional, which operate on this policy and which tend to limit and condition the exercise of power.

AS A STARTING point in such an effort, one must recognize that the enhancement of Moscow's influence in the Middle East ranks third or fourth in Soviet priorities, the stabilization of the USSR's borders in Asia and Europe and the attainment of a stable strategic-conventional military balance taking precedence.[3] Compared to these goals and the necessity of avoiding the triggering of nuclear war (either as a result of direct confrontation in local conflicts or as a result of a clash of proxies and subsequent escalation), Soviet interest in the Middle East is of secondary importance.

Hence, the changing international political and strategic environment provides the context within which Soviet goals and policy in the Middle East must be assessed. The diffusion of power, the proliferation of conventional weapons, the restraints on the use of force, the rise of welfare goals and other issue-areas cutting across earlier political alignments are all aspects of this fluid new setting. As for the USSR in particular, the Soviet achievement of strategic parity, the new global reach of Soviet forces, the development of a special relationship between the superpowers, the partial relaxation of tensions, and the recognition that unlimited competition must be tempered by crisis- and conflict-management in particular cases have given rise to a special superpower perspective in which responsibility to avoid holocaust has tended to supersede support for a local ally's particular goals.[4]

One should keep in mind that different parts of any particular "region" may be of differing importance to Moscow. For example, it is unlikely that the USSR attaches the same important to the Sudan as it does to Iran and Turkey. Unfortunately, none of the authors adequately differentiates between parts of the "Middle East." Freedman simply contends that Soviet readiness to invest in the Middle East is due to a decision that the region is of "major importance" to it (p. 179). Laqueur does differentiate between the Persian Gulf, where, he contends, the USSR has "a specific interest in gaining control," and the Middle East where it seeks predominant influence (p. 260). It is indeed, as M.E. Yapp argues in a recent article,[5] the states contiguous to the USSR which are the primary focus of Soviet interest; the southern belt of Arab states are only a secondary target. If, in the latter sector, a Soviet policy of maintaining "controlled-tensions" seeks to exacerbate anti-Western trends,[6] maximize Arab dependence on the Soviet Union, and gain influence, this is not the policy in the states adjoining the USSR. There, while reduction of Western influence is still the goal, tensions cannot always be controlled, and the risk of warfare and instability on the southern frontiers of the USSR dictates a more conservative strategy.

Once one recognizes that the importance attached to a particular region, or its parts, by the Soviet Union falls along a broad spectrum of priorities, the notion of a grand design for expansion at unlimited costs on a fixed timetable must be discarded. Then one can begin to assess—if crudely—how Moscow allocates its

[2] Ivo J. Lederer, Ed., *Russian Foreign Policy: Essays in Historical Perspective,* New Haven, Conn., Yale University Press, 1962.

[3] See the introductory essay by Lederer in Lederer-Vucinich.

[4] John C. Campbell's essay in the Lederer-Vucinich volume stresses this point.

[5] "The Soviet Union and the Middle East," *Asian Affairs* (London), February 1976, pp. 17-18.

[6] Freedman, p. 174.



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critical resources in pursuit of its interests in the particular area, always mindful that the constraints imposed on the superpowers' behavior by the web of linkages woven between them may, or may not, deter certain behavior. At a given time, one may distinguish between Soviet goals, policy (the means adopted to reach them), and tactics (expedients, often opportunistic, in the service of the goals), always bearing in mind that such distinctions are constantly in flux as a result of shifts in the importance the Soviet Union attaches to one or another priority. Moreover, the achievement of a certain goal (whether "control" or "denial" of control to an adversary) is not dependent on consistency of policy, tactics, or ideology. To serve a larger purpose, opportunism in support of ideologically hostile states is common, and shifting tactical coalitions are inevitable,[7] although such shifts are not to be confused with a reorientation of goals.

WHAT, THEN, have been the characteristics of Soviet policy within the Middle Eastern region? With what degree of success has it met? Yaacov Ro'i documents the USSR's progressively greater involvement in the region, which in itself has required more intricacy in policy. Freedman views Soviet policy there as basically offensive, although he admits this policy at times has had to react to regional developments which it could neither control nor profit from; he concludes that the USSR's position in 1974 was weaker than in 1970 and its influence "very limited indeed."[8] Laqueur agrees that the USSR was no closer to its goals at the end of the October war than before.[9] (Still another analyst has seen evidence in 1975 of even further setbacks for the USSR.[10]) While the reviewer would generally agree with the authors as to the extent of Soviet involvement in the Middle East, he does feel that their interpretations of Soviet policy and its results may be somewhat simplistic. A closer analysis of some of the constraints—both of a global and of a regional nature—operating on this policy may yield sharper insights into the extent that it should be termed a "failure" and also help explain the vicissitudes it has experienced.

Let us first briefly enumerate some of the constraints acting on Soviet foreign policy in general.

(1) Because Moscow's policy in the Middle East does not enjoy top priority (*i.e.*, is not seen as serving a vital interest) in the Soviet scheme of things, it has had to be flexible and accommodating, even to the point of outright reversal at times. It has also suffered from neglect when the USSR was preoccupied elsewhere, as with respect to India in 1971.

(2) The existence of a superpower balance of forces has tended to create a deadlock between the superpowers. This deadlock, in turn, has imposed restraints on Moscow's use of force and made it difficult for the USSR to derive political profit from its conventional military parity with the US.[11]

(3) The perspectives and interests of the superpowers tend to diverge from those of the states that they support. This "asymmetry of aims" and the differences in priorities result in relations of a "strangely tangential nature," which limit the growth of superpower influence.[12] For example, a commitment to crisis-management dictated by global imperatives requires placing limitations on support for an ally—"control" over crises takes precedence over possible beneficial outcomes of any particular conflict. Furthermore, summit meetings between superpowers raise in the minds of the leaders of regional states the specter of collusion at the expense of their countries' interests.

(4) Translating military power into influence has been shown to be very difficult. Indeed, there may well be a two-way flow of influence between sponsor and client states. In the Middle East, specifically, we have seen that Soviet arms assistance to Egypt in the years 1967-1973 did not afford Moscow the ability to control Cairo's behavior.[13]

All of the global considerations have a bearing on Soviet policy in

[7] The Egyptian-US and USSR-Libyan relationship are illustrative. In the early postwar period, the Soviet Union did not get along with the Arab nations and could be described as "an imperialist power no less anti-Arab than the US." See Laqueur, pp. 51, 297.

[8] Freedman, pp. 1, 172-74. Lawrence Whetten, in his study of Soviet-American interaction in the Middle East during 1967-74, interprets Soviet policy differently, viewing it as having been "more responsive than assertive," often to the point of restraining Moscow's "sponsored state from offensive posturing." See *The Canal War, 1967-1974*, Cambridge, Mass., The MIT Press, 1974, p. 320.

[9] Curiously, although Laqueur maintains that it is difficult to discern Soviet gains, he argues that the Soviet leaders had "reason to be satisfied with the outcome of the war" (pp. 259-60).

[10] See William E. Griffith, "Soviet Influence in the Middle East," *Survival* (London), January-February 1976, pp. 207.

[11] Whetten, *op. cit.*, p. 320.

[12] See Alvin Z. Rubinstein, "Moscow and Cairo: Currents of Influence," *Problems of Communism* (Washington, DC), July-August 1974, p. 28, and Arnold Hottinger, "Soviet Influence in the Middle East," *ibid.*, March-April 1975, p. 71. See also, Whetten, *op. cit.*, Chaps. 10 and 11.

[13] See Rubinstein, *loc. cit.*, pp. 17-28, and Rogert F. Pajak, "Soviet Arms and Egypt," *Survival*, July-August 1975, pp. 165-73.



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the Middle East, where the extra-regional superpowers are engaged in competition. Such competition tends to enhance the opportunities of local actors for maneuver. This presents Moscow with the paradoxical situation that its increased military and political power—which has brought it to an approximate balance with the United States—has not yielded commensurate influence vis-à-vis its sponsored states. Some explanation for this paradox can be found in a number of distinctive features of the Middle East which create constraints on Soviet policy there. Among these are:

(1) The combination of strong local nationalisms; the sensitivity of Middle Eastern states to interference, dictation, or the tying of strings to aid; and the divergence of local priorities from those of the Soviet Union. Acceptance of arms assistance, for example, has not entailed deference to the USSR's wishes on the part of the recipients. In fact, a number of Middle Eastern countries have put arms provided them for one purpose to an entirely different use (*e.g.*, Iraq's employment of Soviet arms to combat its Kurdish rebels). Similarly, given governments have attempted to take advantage of Soviet diplomatic support to suppress domestic opposition (including Communists).

(2) Disruptive regional disputes. Such disputes make the extension of commitments to Middle Eastern governments by Moscow a tricky business. Even if designed to reassure client states and restrain them from acting rashly, such support may only encourage the local ally to be more obstinate in its regional disputes, thereby disturbing other regional states with which Moscow might be seeking better relations.[14] Thus, the treaty of friendship with the USSR sought by Iraq in April 1972 merely increased Iraq's intransigence vis-à-vis Iran, and later Syria. The Iraqi-Iranian dispute faced Moscow with a typical "damned if you do, damned if you don't" situation. Inaction would alienate Moscow's Iraqi ally and also risk the possibility of reconciliation between the two states at Soviet expense—*i.e.*, might expose the limited value of the treaty. Overt support of Iraq would alienate Iran and the smaller Persian Gulf states.[15]

(3) Escalation of client expectations. Moscow has found that increased Soviet involvement can lead to demands for even more assistance rather than to increased ability for the Soviet Union to determine the course of events. The way in which increments of assistance tend to enmesh the supplier was demonstrated in the May 1971 treaty with Egypt requested by Moscow. Faced with the prospect of eroding influence if assistance to Egypt was kept at existing levels, Moscow soon had little choice but to make an open-ended commitment or try to cut its losses by decreasing its involvement.

(4) The fluidity of Middle Eastern regional politics. In the Arab world the ideological schism and polarization of the early 1960's has given way to consensus politics. In particular, the creation of a moderate Cairo-Riyadh axis has complicated Moscow's calculations. The connection with Saudi Arabia provides Egypt with a financial option and the long-term prospect of diversifying the sources of its arms. Moreover, Tehran and Ankara are showing increased interest in the Arab-Israeli issue, ending their practical insulation from regional politics and undermining distinctions between aligned and nonaligned states in the region. Finally, the new fluidity reflected in improvement of Washington's ties with Cairo and Damascus has inhibited Soviet advances and further eroded political polarization along East-West lines.

AS ONE LOOKS to the future, it should be recognized that the parameters of the USSR's behavior in the Middle East (and the achievement of its minimal or maximal goals) will be contingent on the future nature of the superpower relationship. Will détente survive political competition (with occasional resort to force) in peripheral areas? Alternately, will the Soviet Union accept the proposition that détente connotes a willingness to exercise restraint, and avoid the temptation to achieve breakthroughs in contested but grey areas? Impeding clarification of a mutually tolerable code of conduct, of course, are uncertainties with regard to Soviet goals. Will Moscow be willing to come to some agreement with Washington on means of regulating mutual access to contested areas? Will the USSR be encouraged by possible divisions and irresolution within the US to take unilateral steps? Will the Soviet Union interpret its attainment of strategic parity (including a prudent margin of insur-

[14] Freedman alludes to this (p. 71). His volume is useful in pointing to some of the constraints operating on Soviet policy.

[15] It should be noted that, contrary to Freedman's assertion (p. 71), the Iraqi-Iranian conflict did facilitate Soviet penetration of the Persian Gulf. Iranian actions in the conflict with Iraq over the Shatt al-'Arab area at the head of the Gulf angered other Gulf states and led them to sympathize with Moscow's client, Iraq. However, the reconciliation of March 1975 between Iraq and Iran should, by diminishing pressures for polarization in the area, tend to impede the expansion of Soviet influence.



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ance against attack) and development of a global maritime capability after years of military inferiority as the inexorable movement of the balance of power in favor of the socialist states? Will it be encouraged to exploit these new capabilities? What will Soviet attitudes be concerning the use of force and risk-taking in such a new context?[16]

Although political competition will doubtless continue, it seems to this reviewer that the special responsibilities of the USSR and the US to avoid catastrophe will mute it. Soviet military might has expanded, but the risk of confrontation will dictate restraint in Soviet use of this power as long as Moscow sees the United States to be armed and resolute. That is, Soviet resort to force in the Middle East or elsewhere will be deterred by the high costs it would entail.

Of course, Soviet policy in the Middle East will also continue to be influenced by structural factors within the region. One such factor is the geopolitical setting. Since Turkey and Iran border on the USSR, Ankara and Teheran are necessarily more sensitive to the possibility that a massively armed Soviet Union might translate its military might into political influence and create pressures for "Finlandization" of these bordering states. Iran and Turkey thus have limited options in responding to any Soviet initiatives, for they can threaten to reverse their alliance relationships with the US only at the cost of an attenuated independence. Moscow may have more opportunities in the Arab states, but the latter, not sharing a common frontier with the Soviet Union, in turn have more room for maneuver in pursuit of their own interests—by exploiting the countervailing power of the US on one occasion, of the USSR on another. For example, Egypt's recent decision to switch arms suppliers *is* viable, even though it may be a lengthy and costly process which is hazardous in the short run and which depends on the willingness of other suppliers to come forward to replace the Soviet Union.

Another factor is the complexity of Middle Eastern regional politics. This makes for shifting tactical coalitions, argues for the spreading of risks, and militates against irreversible breaks.[17] Moreover, the 1973 Arab-Israeli war conclusively proved to Moscow that "client/patron" does not mean "controller/controlled." At the same time, the USSR—notwithstanding setbacks in the Sudan (in 1971) and in Egypt (since 1974)—must be enmeshed in supporting "friendly" states if it is to have influence in the region. To some extent, Moscow can hedge against disaster by taking advantage of intraregional differences to reinsure with *all* parties —an investment in Iraq being matched by one in Syria, a setback in Egypt counterbalanced by increasingly cordial ties with Libya; nonetheless, the basic dilemma remains.

One ought to bear in mind, too, that in the Middle East, Soviet policy can be geared to the long run. Moscow can afford to wait for US hesitation, withdrawal, or failure to deliver an Arab-Israeli peace settlement, hoping to reap the benefits of radicalization and coups resulting from a failure of US peacemaking efforts.

In addition, it does not involve great expense or risk for Moscow to cause unrest in the region by supplying dissatisfied regional states (*e.g.,* the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen) with simple, lethal, man-portable weaponry such as SAM-7 surface-to-air missiles or SWAGGER anti-tank weapons. The USSR can also encourage its extraregional allies to undertake more daring ventures in the Middle East. These allies, though proxies, can be publicly disowned.

From this reviewer's vantage point, it appears that in the immediate future the Arab-Israeli conflict, inter-Arab disputes, regional rivalries, the stresses and strains of modernization, and the need for a diplomatic-military alternative to the US will guarantee receptivity by Middle Eastern states to a continued measure of Soviet influence. Moreover, the USSR's proximity and interests will dictate active Soviet involvement. However, the actual form that this involvement will take will be shaped primarily by the evolution of the relations of the superpowers.

[16] For fuller discussion of some of these topics, see Malcolm Mackintosh, "The Impact of the Middle East Crisis on Superpower Relations," in *The Middle East and the International System, Part I: The Impact of the 1973 War,* Adelphi Paper No. 114, London, International Institute for Strategic Studies, 1975; Hannes Adomeit, *Soviet Risk-Taking and Crisis Behavior: From Confrontation to Coexistence,* Adelphi Paper No. 101, 1973; and R. J. Vincent, *Military Power and Political Influence: The Soviet Union and Western Europe,* Adelphi Paper No. 109, 1975.

[17] Even the breaks with Israel (in 1967) and Pakistan (in 1971) may not prove irreversible, judging by recent Soviet efforts to cultivate Pakistan and the celebrated trips of Soviet go-between Victor Louis to Tel Aviv. For a succinct discussion of the evolution of USSR-Israel relations, consult the essay by Nadav Safran in the Lederer-Vucinich volume. Laqueur is unconvincing in arguing that the USSR is motivated by an emotional dislike of the Jews (pp. 81-82, 201). Laqueur struck a similar note in an earlier work, where he argued that the USSR recognized Israel in a fit of absent-mindedness. See *The Soviet Union and the Middle East,* New York, Praeger, 1959, p. 147.



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# Soviet Views of the United States

**By Richard M. Mills**

ANATOLIY N. MELNIKOV: *Sovremennaya klassovaya struktura SShA* (The Contemporary Class Structure of the USA). Moscow, Mysl, 1974.
SERGEY B. CHETVERIKOV: *Kto i kak delayet politiku SShA?* (Who Makes Policy in the USA and How is it Made?). Moscow, Izdatel'stvo "Mezhdunarodynyye Otnosheniya," 1974.

SOVIET SCHOLARLY studies of the United States are normally cautious in introducing ideas and observations which are at variance with the official orthodoxy. Normally such studies are masterpieces of incremental innovation. Against that background, the books by Messrs. Melnikov and Chetverikov are examples of bridled radicalism, in that each challenges so many aspects of the conventional Soviet wisdom and yet remains orthodox enough to be published.

For all their talk and writing about the class *struggle,* for many decades Soviet authors somehow managed to avoid making a comprehensive analysis of the class structure of the United States. Only in the 1960's were the first book-length, statistically and sociologically descriptive studies published on the United States working class[1] and the monopoly bourgeoisie.[2] Downward mobility was widely commented upon and identified as a pervasive fact of life in a capitalist society where the middle classes were being turned into proleterians through the economic ruin of small and middle-sized farmers and businessmen. The middle classes, however, received scant attention, as did upward social mobility. Melnikov makes an important start in remedying these deficiencies and also makes a considerable contribution to the analysis of downward mobility.

It is typical of the Soviet Marxian analytical method that things which at first look very simple become very complex upon deeper analysis, yet at the conclusion of the analysis they become simple once again. For example, those authors who never go beyond the initial level of analytical simplicity divide capitalist society into two classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. But those authors who venture further in examining the two classes find social strata (*sloi,* in Russian), interstrata (*prosloiki*), and social groups. The bourgeoisie is found to divide into a big and petty bourgeoisie, a financial oligarchy, major and minor monopolies, billionaires and mere millionaires, Wall Street, financial groups—and many more. Similarly, the proletariat divides into a *lumpenproletariat,* a trade-union aristocracy, skilled and unskilled workers, the employed and the unemployed, blue collar and white collar (an explanation of these terms follows below)—and many more. This level of analysis is complex because of the large number of analytical categories used, and it becomes further complicated because the categories are not adequately defined.

Nonetheless, all Soviet authors —whether working at the initial or second level of analysis—believe that "objective" socioeconomic processes are at work which eventually will turn virtually everyone into a proletarian, just prior to the overthrow of the remaining handful of bourgeois. So the outcome of either level of analysis is as simple as the beginning.

MELNIKOV'S ANALYSIS is conducted at the highest level of complexity. As opposed to an initial-level analysis of the proletariat which would envisage the disinherited of the earth marching in

[1] The best example is Nikolay D. Gauzner's *Nauchno-tekhnicheskiy progress i rabochiy klass SShA* (Scientific and Technical Progress and the Working Class of the USA), Moscow, Nauka, 1968. The book was reviewed by this author in the May-June 1971 issue of *Problems of Communism,* pp. 83-84.

[2] See Stanislav Menshikov's *Millionaires and Managers: The Structure of the US Financial Oligarchy,* Moscow, Progress Publishers, 1969.



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solid phalanx against the class enemy, Melnikov's second-level analysis considers the American proletariat of the past 20 years in all its rich variety and contradictions.

It is indeed because Melnikov makes the most complete analysis to date of working-class disunity in the United States that he produces the most comprehensive, informative picture of the American working class in Soviet scholarly literature. He captures the variety among the numerous categories of workers which is occasioned by differences in skill, remuneration, educational level, race, ethnic origin, ascribed status, and type of industry in which a person is employed. He also notes that contradictions abound in the US—*e.g.*, the fact that the American proletariat has a high standard of living but is also saddled with a high cost of living.

Disunity is exacerbated, Melnikov says, because the proletariat is continually growing in size from an influx of the urban and rural ex-petty bourgeoisie (middle-class and lower middle-class persons) who have been economically ruined. For some indeterminate time, they at least partially retain their bourgeois ways of thinking and thus infect the proletarian ranks with bourgeois ideas, making it easier for the monopoly bourgeoisie to split and control the working class.

In Melnikov's view, the proletariat is also growing as a result of the increase in white-collar employees. He notes that there is disagreement among Soviet analysts over whether or not to include the overwhelming majority of white-collar workers in the proletariat. He himself includes them in his definition of the proletariat as

> *. . . a class of hired workers who are deprived of the means of production and therefore live by the sale of their labor power, are subjected to capitalist exploitation, and serve purely executive functions in the spheres of production, exchange, office work, and service.* (p. 53)

On this basis, Melnikov divides the proletariat into two major categories, those working in the sphere of material production (the blue collars) and those in the nonproduction sphere (the white collars). He calculates that in the first quarter of 1973 there were 25.6 million white-collar proletarians in the United States (p. 92). Because of the large white-collar component, the quality of the proletariat (in educational and skill level, for example) is upgraded, but only gradually do the white collars adopt proletarian ways of organizing and acting, by forming white-collar trade unions and engaging in strikes. The latter phenomena are taken as proofs of the proletarianization of persons who may still consider themselves middle-class. As the working conditions of office, commercial, and leisure-industry employees approach those of the blue-collar worker—that is, as everybody increasingly becomes an adjunct to a machine or piece of equipment—political outlook and behavior become homogenized, a precondition of eventual proletarian solidarity. At the same time, Melnikov avoids initial-level simplistic conclusions and offers some sobering thoughts to prevent his readers from conjuring up visions of imminent revolution. Not only is "the contemporary working class not a solid, identical mass" (p. 94), but it tends to be politically passive—for a half dozen reasons that Melnikov takes 30 pages (110-40) to explain, lest any readers be incredulous.

In his chapters, "The Class Structure of the US Rural Population" and "The Intelligentsia and Other Intermediate Strata of the US Population," Melnikov gives the most detailed analysis of the middle class ever to appear in a Soviet book. These are the people in the professions, the arts and sciences, small-and middle-sized urban and rual business, and specialties of various description. Here, he maintains, the tendency is toward proletarianization as the number of self-employed persons dwindles and they are transformed into hired workers. From these chapters, Soviet readers will derive an interesting picture of aspects of the professional and business life of physicians, farmers, attorneys, and specialists which they will not encounter in any other single Soviet source.

Finally, there is a chapter on the capitalist class which attempts to come to terms with changes in the forms of ownership and management in finance, industry, and agriculture, and strives to develop criteria for determining who really is a capitalist and who is not.

A table on p. 299 sums up Melnikov's view of the class picture: Of a gainfully-employed civilian population of 84.1 million in 1971, 56.7 million (67.4 percent) are included in the working class; 23.9 million (28.4 percent) are identified as the petty bourgeoisie, the intelligentsia, and other intermediate strata; and the remaining 3.5 million (4.2 percent) are labeled the bourgeoisie. The major problem with this analysis—which results, of course, from Melnikov's broad definition of "proletariat"—is that it yields a working class which increasingly becomes peopled by persons having very much



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more than just their chains to lose.

TO TURN TO the Chetverikov volume, the author's analysis of policymaking proceeds from the typical Soviet assumption that at the stage of state-monopoly capitalism, political power in society is highly concentrated in the hands of the economic elite, and that in the government—in the case of the US—this concentration is reflected in the expansion of executive power at the expense of the legislature. Moreover, the conventional Soviet analysis continues, the economic monopolies control the executive branch through having their higher employees appointed to top decision-making jobs in the government bureaucracy, including—at the highest level—the Cabinet.

Of course, recognition of the growth of US presidential power at the expense of Congress since the New Deal days is hardly a Soviet monopoly. But the Soviet line of analysis is unique in its assumption that the process is irreversible because it is part and parcel of the development of capitalism into its state-monopoly phase. At the same time, Chetverikov's assessment is unique among Soviet analyses in that he perceives an attempt to arrest and reverse that trend in the context of what he terms the broad-ranging reaction in the United States to the Watergate break-in and its mounting consequences, culminating in President Nixon's resignation.

Granted, Chetverikov says, that the conventional Soviet analysis of state-monopoly capitalism is correct in the long run, still some aspects of American politics have been mistakenly underrated by Soviet writers. For example, for decades the two-party system has been viewed as a meaningless mechanism creating a pretense that the American voter has a choice between two supposedly different political entities. But now it is clear, Chetverikov says, that in the Watergate matter the two-party system operated to create obstacles to the growth of presidential power. Similarly, the role of the courts has been largely ignored in the past, yet they played a large part in Watergate. Also, Soviet writers have either ignored or attacked as meaningless the principle of the separation of powers—a principle used very effectively by the Congress against President Nixon.

Chetverikov therefore implies that the formal powers delegated to Congress by the Constitution are not to be treated lightly, either by American Presidents or by Soviet analysts. He buttresses this highly uncharacteristic perception (for a Soviet author) with a more palatable explanation of Congress's strengthened role: The Congressional staffs have established links with both the middle-level bureaucracy of the executive branch and the bureaucracies of the huge monopolies in private business. Through this growing together (*srashchivaniye*) of bureaucracies, a "triple alliance" is created which also limits the President's power and that of his higher bureaucratic helpers who preside over the Executive Office.

These setbacks, however, turn out to be only temporary. Chetverikov finally concludes that the main tendency in American politics is still the concentration of power in the presidency, but says it is finding new expression in what he calls "bureaucratic centralism" —the reaction to the "triple alliance" threat. In the complex bureaucratic situation created by the growth of the federal bureaucracy, by Lyndon Johnson's "Cooperative Federalism," and by Richard Nixon's "New Federalism," he who coordinates also controls. There are, according to Chetverikov, two loci of control: The President attempts to control via his Executive Office organization, and the monopolies try to control by packing the executive branch's multitude of consultative and coordinating committees with their representatives.

In a word, this book has something for all its Soviet readers. The conservatively inclined will doubtless be pleased by Chetverikov's long-range predictions regarding American politics. His more moderate readers will take well to his insights regarding the imbalance in the orthodox Soviet view of those politics. And certainly all his Soviet readers will obtain much more hard information about American politics than they normally get in one Soviet volume.

To be sure, there are quite a few loose ends in Chetverikov's analysis, but even that is a welcome change from many other Soviet analyses which—having failed to probe beyond pat formulations—have no loose ends at all. Although he has not adequately answered the questions posed in his title, Chetverikov has nevertheless come the closest of any Soviet author so far to doing so.

TO SUM UP, notwithstanding all the limitations occasioned by their ideological constraints as well as by their pathbreaking nature, these two volumes are the best and most informative studies on the United States produced by Soviet Americanists in recent years.

A final word might be said con-



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cerning the sponsorship of the volumes, which reveals something about the current state of affairs in Moscow. For whatever reason, the Mezhdunarodnyye Otnosheniya Publishing House—which normally prints very conservative books—published Chetverikov's venturesome analysis. And Melnikov's book was sponsored by none other than the Main Editorial Board of Textbook Literature of the Central Committee's Higher Party School and its Academy of the Social Sciences. Apparently the higher authorities are very serious about serious studies of the United States.

# The Human Rights Movement in the USSR

**By Hilary A. Sternberg**

VALERY CHALIDZE: *To Defend These Rights: Human Rights and the Soviet Union.* New York, Random House, 1974.
GEORGE SAUNDERS, Ed.: *Samizdat: Voices of the Soviet Opposition.* New York, Monad Press, 1974.
CORNELIA GERSTENMAIER: *Die Stimme der Stummen: Die Demokratische Bewegung in der Sowjetunion.* English translation: *The Voices of the Silent,* NY, Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1972. Translated by Susan Hecker.

THERE STILL ARE Western commentators who seize upon manifestations of dissent in the USSR as evidence of an anti-Soviet opposition. Yet, the conclusion that emerges from the three books under review is that the so-called "democratic" or "human rights" movement in the Soviet Union is esentially a movement *for,* not *against.* It is a movement for many things: for the right to exercise elementary civil freedoms; the right to say, write, and publish what one wishes; the right to have access to information; the right to criticize violations of commonly accepted standards of legality—further enumeration is unnecessary. As George Saunders emphasizes, however, many Soviet advocates of human rights remain Communists and seek a solution to Russia's problems within the framework of socialism.

Indeed, it is only what Chalidze would term the "logic of the end" that brands such dissenters as anti-Soviet. This is the logic peculiar to the Soviet official mentality, but which, alas, has so ensnared large sections of the Soviet public that the average reader of *Pravda* or *Izvestiya* can find no fault with the reasoning of the judge who "proves" the guilt of the dissenter in the dock by arguing: "You knew you would be arrested for circulating this manuscript; *ergo* you knew it was anti-Soviet." Chalidze claims that in the USSR the study of classical and mathematical logic is in effect prohibited and its use restricted to purely scientific fields and the computer industry, and that for other processes (including those of thought) requiring the application of a logical system, the preferred—indeed, the obligatory—one is the system of dialectical logic, in which the conclusions are known in advance and the reasoning reconstructed in reverse in accordance with unspoken premises. In this "logic of the end," he asserts, "arguments that are not supposed to be articulated are invisibly included in the chain of reasoning . . . and are understandable to the listeners," and "ways to ignore arguments that conflict with the necessary conclusions have been well worked out."

Soviet dissenters are a politically and socially disparate group, but they all share an awareness of the falsity of this logic as well as a determination not simply to exercise their rights in a vacuum but to fill that vacuum by educating



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the public in the lost art of traditional, logical modes of thinking. Thus Chalidze sees "encouraging the art of thinking" as one of the main aims of the human rights movement, and it was to this end, as well as with the more immediate and practical aim of rendering assistance to the unjustly persecuted, that, together with Academician Andrey Sakharov and Andrey Tverdokhlebov, he founded the Moscow Human Rights Committee in November 1970.

Chalidze is a self-styled *zakonnik*—that is, an advocate of the legalistic approach to dissent and protest. In his own words, this approach stresses *"keeping* people out of jail" rather than *getting* them out. In theoretical terms, it involves the study of Soviet law and court practices in order to work out "methods of acting that minimize the risk of unlawful repression and to recommend these as substitutes for methods that almost always provoke such repression." He has been criticized for his moderation and restraint both by some of his fellow dissidents in the USSR and by their sympathizers in the United States since his enforced exile, but he has remained loyal to his principles and offers a dignified and convincing defense of them in *To Defend These Rights,* together with a selection of documents, mostly written by himself, explaining the practical application of his method. He does not claim any startling successes; indeed, he is extremely pessimistic about the effectiveness of his approach, at least in the short term. The outlook is grim, he admits, so long as "the majority of Russians have a low level of legal culture."

Chalidze paints a bleak picture of Soviet reality in several chapters dealing with restrictions on freedom of speech, of the press, of assembly, of association, and of movement; with discrimination against minorities; and with methods of persecution in the prisons, labor camps, and mental hospitals. He believes that the Soviet public is even more conservative than its rulers and would "prefer harsher punishment for violators of public order than is meted out by the organs of government." Many citizens, he notes, take a positively sinister pleasure in performing their "voluntary" duties as *druzhinniki* (auxiliary police). The upshot of all this is that Lenin's prediction of a gradual "withering away of the law" has come to pass in a most unexpected and appalling way; instead of becoming redundant in a bright Communist future, the law has "withered away" by becoming entirely subordinate to or synonymous with party and state interests. The irony of the situation does not escape Chalidze, whose depressing analysis is punctuated with outbursts of a sort of angry humor.

IN CONTRAST to Chalidze's view that the human rights movement exists in almost total isolation from the broad masses, George Saunders claims—somewhat debatably—that dissenting intellectuals and students "draw inspiration and courage from the mood of the workers and the knowledge that they have the support of the workers" (although he goes on to quote Andrey Amalrik's assertion that "no one, including even the bureaucratic elite, really knows what attitudes prevail among the wider sections of the population.")[1] While it is indeed a well-known fact that Soviet workers are less than happy with their jobs, wages, and living standards, it is doubtful whether they are (with some exceptions) very much concerned with the more philosophical struggle for human rights and democracy, and it is still more doubtful that the combination of worker discontent and dissidence among intellectuals today represents, as Saunders implies, something akin to the old "workers' opposition" of the early 1920's.

But even though Saunders perhaps overpoliticizes worker dissent, his book does provide an abundance of interesting information on various oppositionary tendencies that have emerged in the USSR. His introduction tells of revolutionary underground groups that came into being during the period 1945-53 both outside and inside the labor camps—one of these groups is said to have led the famous general strike of July 1953 in the notorious camps of Vorkuta. Saunders also presents materials concerning various "neo-Bolshevik," "Leninist," "liberal socialist," and "anti-socialist" groups which emerged in the late 1950's, chiefly in the universities. These, however, did not represent so much a conscious continuation of traditional opposition currents—as Saunders would have us believe—as a response to a new, comparatively relaxed political climate. The post-1966 "Communist opposition" (including former Soviet Army Major-General Pëtr G. Grigorenko, Aleksey Ye. Kosterin, Ivan A. Yakhimovich, and others) is also well represented in Saunders' anthology. It has, in fact, proven to be only one facet of an expanding "democratic" movement, of which the chief proponent today is dissident historian Roy Medvedev, who in early 1975

[1] In "Will the USSR Survive Until 1984?" *Survey* (London), Autumn 1969, p. 61.



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founded his own "journal of the loyal oppositon." The reported involvement of members of the party and government elite in this trend has lent it new and undeniable significance in the present climate of international détente and Soviet domestic difficulties.

IF CHALIDZE focuses on the corruption of Soviet law and logic and Saunders on the political wellsprings of dissent, Cornelia Gerstenmaier reminds us that protest is made by people, is impelled by individual idealism, and involves considerable personal sacrifice and suffering. Her book presents biographical sketches and character studies of many of the leading individuals in the literary underground of the 1960's and the subsequent, more militant protest movement of recent years, together with an extremely evocative, honest, and human—if at times emotional—background narrative. Altogether it provides a vivid overall picture of the changes in atmosphere and emphasis during the post-Stalin thaw, the Khrushchev period, and the Brezhnev years through the tragedy of the invasion of Czechoslovakia and its effect on the Soviet intelligentsia, up to the recent attempts by the regime to control the ever-expanding network of *samizdat* writers and purveyors of "uncensored" information. The narrative is supplemented by a wide-ranging selection of *samizdat* documents, most of them already familiar to us (an index would have greatly increased their usefulness). Unfortunately the English-language version of the book is marred by many misrenderings of Russian proper names and other Russian terms translated or transliterated from the German, apparently without reference to the original Russian form.

Developments since the writing of *The Voices of the Silent* (in 1971) have overshadowed, though not altogether invalidated, Ms. Gerstenmaier's optimistic conclusion that the "early signs of freedom" are discernible, and that "presumably, in a moment of temporary relaxation of the pressure exerted on them by the authorities, they [the dissidents] will quickly expand and come into their own." As we know, many of them have been forced within the last four years to leave "their own" and go into exile or emigration, and it is the sober pessimism of Chalidze that has now become the order of the day. Nevertheless, Ms. Gerstenmaier remains right in her warning that "the rulers must soon seriously consider the possibility of opposition from previously loyal sectors" (witness the Medvedev brothers). She also shares Chalidze's hope that disillusionment and skepticism both outside *and* inside the party are a positive phenomenon, a "slight social advance," a first step toward the transformation of the party into a more flexible—even if thoroughly materialist and career-minded—body. As Chalidze puts it, "repugnant to decent people, cynicism is nonetheless more humane than fanaticism."



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# Notes & Views
# Correspondence

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## MOSCOW AND WORLD REVOLUTION

TO THE EDITORS: Making sense out of Moscow's persistent as well as dangerously archaic pursuit of worldwide revolution is difficult, if for no other reason than its basically irrational nature when placed in the context of the thermonuclear age. But there is also a "rational," or at least shrewd, side to this equation passed over in Thomas T. Hammond's comprehensive discussion, "Moscow and Communist Takeovers" (*Problems of Communism,* January-February 1976, pp. 48-67). In the late 1950's, when the USSR began to feel bullish over the upgrading of its arsenal by the addition of strategic rockets, culminating in Sputnik I, a new line was introduced into the ideology of "Internationalism": *correlation of forces.* As Soviet military strength has grown apace since then, but especially following the ouster of Khrushchev in October 1964, the concept of correlation of forces has taken on greater significance in the tactics and strategy both of Soviet foreign policy and of Cominternism.

It is becoming less and less apt to speak of Soviet "hesitation" to make more forceful applications of Internationalism (Cominternism) in the form of military aid, in many forms, to subversive and guerrilla elements in foreign countries, Third-World or industrial-world. One encounters with increasing frequency in Soviet materials in the 1970's the notion that the correlation of forces—meaning both the force of Soviet arms as well as the subversive forces represented by Communist and pro-Communist elements worldwide—has shifted in the Soviets' favor. Perhaps the Kremlin exaggerates this shift; in current "world power" assessments comparing Eastern and Western military, political, social, and other areas of strength, the West still tends to win the most points. But nearly everyone who makes such assessments agrees that a certain disequilibrium threatens the Western advantage, exemplified by the clear disparity in expenditures on arms and men under arms between East and West. Moreover, rates of growth and improvement in the arsenals of the two sides appear now to be in the Soviet bloc's favor. What is most important, in the context of Soviet "takeovers," is the fact that Soviet spokesmen do make the connection between military-force buildup and aid to Communist foreign subversion and "civil war." This may be traced all the way back to Mikhail Suslov's address to the 20th CPSU Congress in 1956; it was again brought up at the 25th CPSU Congress earlier this year.

A second point Professor Hammond might have raised in his piece concerns the present Soviet line on the "General Crisis of Capitalism" (*vseobshchiy krizis kapitalizma*), one of the most recent references to which appeared in Brezhnev's greeting to the "Bonn Congress" of the West German Communist Party (*Pravda,* March 20, 1976, p. 1). The authoritative Higher Party School textbook, *Mezhdunarodnoye kommunisticheskoye, rabocheye i natsional'no-osvoboditel'noye dvizheniye* (The International Communist, Workers' and National-Liberation-Struggle Movement), Moscow, 1974, p. 6, refers to the "third stage" of this "general crisis" as having opened in the mid-1950's. It implies that this is not only the third stage but the *last* in the decline and fall of capitalism (and Western-style democracy). Brezhnev is quoted within this context as maintaining (p. 10) that the "last, decisive battle *(boy)* for the overthrow of capitalism lies ahead"; another possible translation is "draws near" (*vperedi*). It is possible that such remarks as this deserve to be tempered with the observation that Soviet leaders going all the way back to Lenin have predicted that they would see the "ultimate battle" and the "ultimate victory" of communism, or the worldwide Apocalypse, in their own times. The message was reiterated by Stalin and his colleagues on a number of occasions. However, by the time of Khrushchev, the late Soviet leader tended to refer to the Apocalypse as a vision or an event which only his grandchildren or great, great grandchildren would have the privilege of witnessing (although Khrushchev spoke of "burying capitalism" and predicted the coming of fullfledged communism to the USSR by 1980 or so). Still, the ongoing and admittedly shocking Soviet-bloc military buildup, its increasingly offensive-strategic "feel," the increased references to Moscow's "duty" to support Communist insurrection abroad (particularly striking at the 25th Party Congress), and the recruitment of Cuban guerrilla proxies in the case of Angola and possible future "Angolas" give cause for some alarm. Statements emanating from the US Department of State in the wake of Angola illustrate this concern over stepped-up Soviet "revolutionariness" (*revoliutsionnost'*).

One thing is certain: All those predictions in the early post-Khrushchev days that the new team in the Kremlin consisted of lackluster, non-ideological "clerks" and workaday bureaucrats have not quite washed. Professor Hammond's words about the pres-



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ent Soviet rulers have the ring of truth: "They may not be as fanatical as the Bolsheviks were in 1917, but they still look upon the idea of a Communist world as a desirable long-run goal . . . they probably get a visceral feeling of pleasure at the prospect of communism winning out in yet another part of the globe" (*loc. cit.*, p. 55).

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TO THE EDITORS: In "Moscow and Communist Takeovers" (*Problems of Communism*, January-February 1976, pp. 48-67), Prof. Thomas T. Hammond committed a blunder which is common to those who employ the conjectural approach to Soviet policies and which negatively affects current Sovietology. On p. 53, Prof. Hammond alleges that "The Soviets train revolutionaries at the Lenin Institute and at Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow and at special camps in Odessa, Tashkent, Simferopol', and Baku." It should be recalled that most Western reporters and scholars wrote similar false stories about Patrice Lumumba University in the early 1960's. As a graduate of Patrice Lumumba University (1964-69) and as a widely traveled scholar in the USSR (1971-72, 1974), I must say that Prof. Hammond's allegation concerning both the Lenin Institute and the Patrice Lumumba University is empty propaganda.

The only special school in the Moscow region where foreign Communists (and "freedom fighters") are trained is the Komsomolskaya shkola pri TsK VLKSM located in the settlement of Vishniki, some 15 miles from Moscow. You can get to Vishniki by train from the "Novyye Doma" local train station just off from Shosse Entuziastov (Enthusiast Highway) in Moscow. Instruction at this school is normally for two years. Students from a "hostile" country, (*e.g.*, Nigeria under the civilian regime) are registered under a false name and classified as citizens of a "friendly" country (*e.g.*, Ghana under Kwame Nkrumah).

Revolutionaries were never trained at the Patrice Lumumba University. If, however, by "revolutionaries" Prof. Hammond means young specialists in Marxist-Leninist philosophy, then we must say that *all* Soviet universities (and in fact the entire Soviet educational system from the nursery school up) train "revolutionaries." If this is the case, I must point out that I saw more "revolutionaries" trained in North American universities than at any time during my study at the Patrice Lumumba University. It is high time we employed objectivism in our analysis of Soviet politics.

DR. O. IGHO NATUFE
Ottawa, Canada

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PROF. HAMMOND REPLIES: Dr. Natufe's letter is most interesting, and I hope he will give us some additional information about the things that he learned while he was in Moscow. I certainly cannot match his experience as a student at Lumumba University, but I wonder how he can be sure that revolutionaries were *never* trained there. If he attended the University from 1964 to 1969, how does he know that revolutionaries were not enrolled before or after those years? And in a university as large as that one, how could he be certain of the identity and the training of every student, even while he was there?

As regards the Lenin Institute, it would be helpful if Dr. Natufe explained the basis for his expertise regarding this institution and how he knows that it does not train revolutionaries.

The source of the statement in my article is Mr. Brian Crozier, a well-known British authority on the subject. Until additional information is supplied by Dr. Natufe, I will reserve judgment as to which of the two men is correct. Meanwhile, I am sure that many people, myself included, would be most interested if Dr. Natufe were to write an article or a book about his unusual experiences and supply additional details about Lumumba University, the Lenin Institute, and the Komsomol school at Vishniki, particularly details he was able to verify from first-hand observations.

I don't believe Prof. Weeks' letter requires any additional comment from me.

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## THE "GESTAPU" AFFAIR

TO THE EDITORS: It was with astonishment that I read Guy Pauker's review of some recent books on Indonesia (*Problems of Communism*, November-December 1975, pp. 57-61). In it, he embarks upon a sermon on what constitutes historical and political objectivity and "accepted standards of scholarship." In particular, he states that in the case of the 1965 coup in Indonesia, ". . . there are many reasons for approaching the evidence offered by all parties with considerable skepticism." He proceeds to castigate Rex Mortimer, whose book *Indonesian Communism Under Sukarno* is, in fact, widely recognized among scholars in the field as being a particularly well-balanced and well-informed account.

Be that as it may, it is surely not for Mr. Pauker to query the scholarly credentials and impartiality of others. As a CIA mandarin specializing on Indonesia, he was from the outset closely involved both with the military and academic figures in Indonesia who were to emerge as the victors after the fall of Sukarno, and with those in America who from at least as early as 1963 actively plotted Sukarno's fall. All this has been recently documented in great detail by Professor Peter Dale Scott in his article, "Exporting Military-Economic Development: America and the Overthrow of Sukarno, 1965-67," which appeared in a volume entitled *Ten Years' Military Terror in Indonesia* (Spokesman Books, Nottingham, England, 1975), which I edited. It is, I suppose, to the credit of Pauker that he made no effort to hide his desire for, and eventual pleasure in, a Nazi-style "solution" to the Indonesian "problem" as perceived by the American oil companies, whose interests Sukarno was threatening (see Pauker's RAND memoranda of November 1964 and February 1969, quoted by Prof. Scott, *ibid.*, pp. 231 and 232). Such candor, however, does not by itself entitle Mr. Pauker to impugn the objectivity of others.

It is, incidentally, of some interest—as a demonstration of yet another admirable trait (modesty)—that he starts his review with the balanced and scholarly sentence—"About ten years have passed since the gruesome sequence of events which *started with* the kidnaping and assassination



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of six prominent Indonesian Army generals on the night of September 30/October 1, 1965" (emphasis added). *Started* with? Come, come, Mr. Pauker, we *know* you know better than that!

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African Studies
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TO THE EDITORS: Under normal circumstances, scholars must expect their published works to be subject to probing critical reviews and have no reason to complain if they are fairly attacked. But Guy Pauker's review of Rex Mortimer's book, *Indonesian Communism under Sukarno: Ideology and Politics, 1959-1965,* published in the November-December issue of your journal, pages 57-61, is so distorted that it demands a response, which I trust you will print as a matter of courtesy.

Rather than dealing in any substantive way with Mortimer's complex and detailed analysis of PKI ideology, strategy and leadership throughout the turbulent years of Sukarno's Guided Democracy, Pauker levels an intemperate attack on what he himself says (p. 58) are " a few pages of [Mortimer's] study and two relatively short appendices" dealing with the question of PKI involvement in the October 1, 1965, Affair. In the process Pauker impugns Mortimer's integrity and scholarship. He also uses guilt-by-association techniques to denigrate Mortimer for being "a student of Herbert Feith, who in turn had been a student of George McT. Kahin at Cornell University" and for expressing his gratitude "to two other members of the Cornell group [sic], Benedict R. O'G. Anderson and Ruth T. McVey . . ." (p. 58).

Pauker asserts that "even after admitting that he did not study the trial records, Mortimer goes on to cast doubt on the testimony of one of the key defendants (named Sjam) in the Gestapu Affair trials" (p. 60). In the first place Mortimer "admits" nothing of the kind, as is evident from the very passage that Pauker himself quotes from Mortimer's book (p. 59). Secondly, Pauker himself says that the honesty or trumped-up character of these trials "is not a question which can be answered lightly on the basis of the evidence that has so far become available" (p. 58)—which suggests that "casting doubt on the testimony" of a defendant might be a reasonable undertaking, particularly when Pauker observes that he himself was "not entirely convinced that the trial (of Sjam) was not stage-managed . . ." (p. 60)!

Thirdly, Pauker accuses Mortimer of "casually suggesting that Sjam may have been a government *agent provocateur,* without making the slightest effort to construct a case in support of that hypothesis" (p. 60). This is an outright distortion, since Mortimer, on page 431 of his book, shows on the basis of documentary and other evidence that Sjam was a member in the early 1950's of the strongly anti-Communist Indonesian Socialist Party, which had close connections to Army Intelligence, and that the Indonesian military themselves have admitted that Sjam was an informer for the Greater Jakarta Regiment in the late 1950's.

Readers are also misled when Pauker quotes (p. 59) a passage in the preface to the so-called Cornell Paper of the 1965 Affair written by Ruth T. McVey, Frederick Bunnell and myself to the following effect: "This copy is . . . for your eyes only. The material in it is common property, feel free to use it as you wish in publication, but please do not refer in any way to this document." Pauker goes on to insinuate that this quotation is evidence of unscholarly conspiracy. He fails to inform your readers that this section of the preface in fact read as follows: "You will understand, however, that because of the provisional character of the analysis, and because of the repercussions which knowledge of this report may arouse in some places, we do not wish it to receive further circulation. This copy, therefore, is for your eyes only. The material in it is common property; feel free to use it as you wish in publication, but please do not refer in any way to this document." [1] At the time of writing, January 1966, large-scale massacres were taking place in Indonesia, and it seemed very possible that in such an atmosphere, if it became known that the authors had presented a hypothesis about the "coup" which ran counter to the official version, friends and acquaintances who had no knowledge of the analysis might be held accountable. This, not conspiracy, was the reason for the text's limited circulation. Furthermore, Pauker glosses over the fact that the phrase "common property" above clearly referred to the *material* used—evidence gathered from provincial newspapers and magazines then only available at Cornell University—*not* the analysis.

[1] Benedict R. Anderson, Ruth T. McVey and Fredrick P. Bunnell, *A Preliminary Analysis of the October 1, 1975, Coup in Indonesia,* Ithaca, NY, Modern Indonesia Project, 1971.

Finally, Pauker's call for "a serious effort to reconstruct the Gestapu Affair in keeping with scholarly historiographic standards" (p. 61) is ironic in view of the following facts: (1) Although the Rand Corporation where he is employed has long had one of the largest collections of trial transcripts, Pauker has not only never made any such "serious effort" but has written a number of reviews and short articles about the October 1, 1965, Affair in precisely the spirit of "unscholarly political pamphleteering" (p. 60) that he ascribes to Mortimer. (2) At Rand Pauker collaborated with Generals Nugroho Notosusanto and Ismail Saleh of the Indonesian Armed Forces on a quasi-official joint analysis of the "Gestapu Affair." This text was subsequently published in Indonesia, but with all traces of Pauker's involvement concealed—prudently, perhaps, in view of his admission (p. 58) that he found it moot where the "Gestapu trials" lay on a continuum (sic) of fairness between Sirica's and Vyshinsky's courts!

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MR. PAUKER REPLIES: When —at the request of the Editors of *Problems of Communism*—I wrote more than a year ago a review article on Rex Mortimer's book, I knew nothing about the author's background.

I have recently learned from a distinguished Australian specialist on Indonesia that Mr. Mortimer "was for many years a leading member of the Central Committee of the Australian Communist Party, until the great split



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## CORRECTION

The photograph of Soviet General Secretary L. I. Brezhnev talking with a shopgirl in Nurek, Tadzhikistan (*POC*, March-April 1976, p. 6) was erroneously credited. The photo was serviced from TASS via EUPRA.

when he fell out with all three factions."

Had I known this fact earlier, I would have declined the Editors' invitation. The values and standards of ideological militants are too different from my own. Mr. Mortimer and perhaps those who defend him by attacking me have political motives. All I want is to know what really happened in Indonesia in 1965-66.

Mr. Mortimer used a Ph.D. thesis as the vehicle for perpetuating the allegation that the assassination of the six Indonesian generals was "an internal Army affair." This was the line taken by the PKI in early October 1965. Mr. Mortimer offers no new evidence in support of that thesis, but the scholarly format of his preceding chapters gives it undeserved weight.

Mr. Mortimer's friends do not advance our understanding of the 1965 coup by invective. Mr. Mortimer's "objectivity," to quote Mr. Caldwell, or "integrity and scholarship," in Mr. Anderson's words, are not established by calling me names, but by documenting the accuracy of his statements. The two letters which you choose to publish do not even attempt to do that, for the obvious reason that the evidence is not in their favor.

Sjam could have been a member of the Indonesian Socialist Party in the early 1950's and an informer of the Army in the late 1950's, before joining the Communist Party. He could also have been a PKI agent used to penetrate the Socialist Party and military intelligence before receiving the more sensitive mission of setting up the Special Bureau of the PKI.

The Gestapu Affair raises many such questions on which it is difficult if not impossible to come close to the truth. Understandably, persons with strong ideological motives are not troubled by such uncertainties and will not be able to understand my reason for not writing an analytic study of the Gestapu Affair: there are still too many gaps in the available evidence.

While it is obvious that the assassination of the six Army generals was *not* "an internal Army affair," the precise role of Sukarno, the PKI, the Indonesian Air Force, the People's Republic of China and other factors is far from established, ten years later.

The trial transcripts which I obtained in Djakarta have been donated by The Rand Corporation to the Hoover Institution of Stanford University, Stanford, California. Supporters of the thesis of the "Cornell Paper" who have no ideological commitment to that bizarre piece of historical fiction may find the study of the trial records illuminating, even if these do not contain the whole truth. They will also benefit from reading an intelligence report entitled, "Indonesia 1965—The Coup That Backfired," written by Mrs. Helen-Louise Hunter in 1968 as a government briefing paper. This report was released by the International Relations Committee of the US House of Representatives on April 7, 1976, after the CIA's Directorate of Intelligence declassified it at the request of Congressman James M. Jeffords (R. Vermont). The report can be obtained through the Document Expediting (DOCEX) Project, Exchange and Gift Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 20540.

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